

The Cyber Issue

Connecting Past to Present on E-mail

By Ellyn Ruthstrom

One day this September a name appeared in my IN box on e-mail that looked familiar, yet seemed so unlikely that I didn't rush to open it. When I did, I discovered that it really was from Nan C., someone I had gone to high school with and hadn't seen or heard from in twenty years. She had done a search for my name on a net directory and wanted to know if I was THE Ellyn Ruthstrom who had grown up in a certain town in Connecticut. Indeed, I was. And because it was one of those low days when you need a bit of magic to enter your life, I was especially pleased by this unexpected e-epistle.

Nan and I had known each other best through our work with the Drama Club; she had stage managed and done the technical backstage work and I had acted and directed. I had a vivid memory of dancing with Nan at one of the high school dances, we were doing "the bump" and from then on I had nicknamed her Tush. She graduated a year ahead of me so we only had three years in school together, and we lost touch after she entered college. And now she was living in Washington state in the middle of conservative lumber territory.

The letter warmed me in the first few sentences. Nan said she had often wondered about me over the years, wondered where "the only other woman in my high school who proudly admitted to being a feminist!" had ended up. Seeing that she wasn't 100% sure I was the person she had known, she kept her first letter brief, but did give me a short synopsis of her present life.

"I'll give up my side first.... married a man about 12 yrs ago (I'll keep anonymous in case you are someone else)...didn't nec. choose a man, just chose a mate. Still have some guilt over the legal portion of the marriage, given that so many of my loved ones are not afforded that luxury, as I would have been had I chosen a moment sooner or later. We have two divine boys that have graced us as parents. A fabulous challenge to raise feminist

Past continues on page 6



by Cygnus Software

Bisexuality and The Cyber Age

By Carol Gebert

The Cyber Age was dawning even before the arrival of the Internet. It began when people were first able to disembodify their thoughts. Its roots could be traced back to the invention of writing itself. But, the freedom and opportunity for an average person to write voluminously, and the ability to communicate it in a widespread manner, really only arrived in the last few decades, becoming a mushroom of activity since the adoption of the Internet.

When the printing press was invented, social leaders were very worried that people would use it for impure writing. There were all sorts of attempts to restrict its use only for printing bibles. Of course, that failed, and pornography went on to spearhead the use of not only the printing press, but all communications technology since. Pornography influenced the popular acceptance of the novel (e.g. "Pamela"), the video cassette, and the Internet.

The definition of pornography has
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Schwenk

Annie Goglia

Linda Blair

Lynn Levine

Ellen Cullen

Kelly

Maria

Robyn Ochs

Carol

Amy

Natalie



*And many more
wonderful
women! You
know who you
are! Thank you,
thank you, thank
you!*

Thanks again!

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monthly.

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Ellyn Ruthstrom

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Natalie

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recycled paper**

BBWN Keeps Expanding: Keep Participating!

It's timely that *BiWomen* is focusing on The Cyber Issue this time. Most people in this country, and many more beyond our borders, have been affected by the tremendous growth of the world wide web and the use of e-mail. Many bi people have connected to bi community for the first time through online resources. News-groups, webpages, and chat rooms have all offered space for important interaction and resource exchange. This issue includes views on how the new technology is changing life as we know it. Carol Gebert sees the technology as a hopeful rush towards PoMo Sexuality; Linda Blair cheerfully comes out as a techno-dummy; and I am thankful for how the technology facilitated the reconnection to an old friend.

Though BBWN has been on the web for a while through the BRC page, we are now expanding to include parts of the *BiWomen* newsletter and to offer more immediate access to contribute to and comment on the contents of *BiWomen*. (See page 7 for more details on these developments.) We are also expanding into several e-mail lists to help members communicate about BBWN things, as well as some open discussion. (See page 10 for info on how to sign up to be a part of this.)

Take a look at our future issue topics on this page. Any interest in sharing your thoughts on these? Even as we delve into the web, we realize that by far our strongest tie to each other is this newsletter and it's important we include lots of different perspectives in our pages. If you have an idea for a future topic, please let us know; we are always looking for fresh ideas.

BBWN's fifteenth anniversary year, 1998, went out with a bang in December with the fabulous Third Annual Holiday House Party. (See page 9 for photos of the entertainers and our amazing hostesses.) If you want to see the photos that couldn't be printed in the newsletter, just let me know. Each year the party seems to get better. Thank you, Ananda and Amy, for your generous hospitality all three years. Can we even hope for a fourth?

Ellyn Ruthstrom

The Boston Bisexual Women's Network is a feminist, not-for-profit collective organization whose purpose is to bring women together for support and validation. It is meant to be a safe environment in which women of all sexual self-identities, class backgrounds, racial, ethnic and religious groups, ages, abilities and disabilities are welcome. Through the vehicles of discussion, support, education, outreach, political action and social groups related to bisexuality, we are committed to the goals of full acceptance as bisexuals within the gay and lesbian community, and to full acceptance of bisexuality and the liberation of all gay people within the larger society.

Next in *Bi Women*:

The *BiWomen* theme for April/May is:

Heartache & Healing

How did you get over your last broken heart? Or even your first one? Is there a difference between when a man or when a woman breaks your heart? Share your personal stories and tips for moving on after the pain.

DEADLINE: March 12, 1999

Future Issues in 1999

June/July: Children

August/September: Seduction



Please Submit to *BiWomen*!

Send articles, calendar entries, letters,
black-and-white art, news and views to:

BiWomen

P.O. Box 400639

Cambridge, MA 02140

or via e-mail to eruthstr@mail.lesley.edu.

*If you do not want your name published,
please tell us.*

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this newsletter are copyrighted
by the authors and artists.



Members of the Bisexual People of Color group at their first meeting, organized by 'tina Blanco (front row, right) and [redacted] (2nd row, 2nd from left).

New Group for Bisexual People of Color

By [redacted]

There is a new monthly group for bisexual people of color meeting in Boston! I wanted to start this group a couple of years ago but did not get very far. Then, in the fall of 1997, Maria Christina ('tina) Blanco offered to be the co-founder of the group and asked if I was interested in working on it again.

We currently meet in the library of the Boston Living Center for a potluck dinner one Sunday a month. The Living Center always seems so welcoming and a great place to get people comfortable. We have had fourteen people attend so far in our first two meetings!


The new group has been attended by people of Asian-American, African-American, biracial, Latina, and Latino heritage, with several international members as well. People of color of diverse ethnicities are all welcome to the group.

The group is also meant for people of all genders, and like other bisexual groups, includes people with a variety of expressions of their bisexuality. There are members who are married, partnered, single, monogamous, polyamorous, gay identified, or bisexual activists.

We start each meeting with a social hour and dinner, then we have a discussion. Discussion topics so far have included "What Communities Are You a Part Of?" and "What Does Bisexuality Mean to You?" The talks have been passionate as

people had the chance to discuss feelings that we often do not have many outlets for.

I organized a bisexual people of color workshop attended by a dozen people at the BiFest gathering in 1991. In 1997, at the International Bisexual Conference held in Boston, several visitors from out-of-town organized a people of color lunch which was attended by about 25 people. These gatherings are often very moving for those who attend, just as when any group of people meets that is usually invisible.

If you have questions about attending the group, please call the Bisexual Resource Center office and leave a message for Ananda or Maria Christina, at 617-424-9595. 

Bisexual People of Color Potlucks

February 28

March 28

All potlucks are held 5-7 p.m. at
the Boston Living Center,
29 Stanhope Street.



BBWN Events, etc.

Check out pages 11 and 12 for all BBWN and Biversity events for February and March. If you would like to host a BBWN brunch or organize another local event, please leave a message at the BRC office (617-424-9595) or call Ellyn at 617-926-8737. Do you want to be on the BBWN phone list to get reminders about upcoming events? Call Ellyn and give her your name and number and she will add you to the list.

That Takes Ovaries!!

Girls and women of all ages and backgrounds are encouraged to submit their true stories for a book entitled *That Takes Ovaries! Bold Females and Their Brazen Acts*. Seeking submissions (double spaced, 1000 words max) of anything YOU have ever done that was gutsy, courageous, bold, audacious, or inspirational. It can be playful, serious, spontaneous, calculated, smart, sexy, and/or an example of leadership. Something that, when you think about it today, makes you nod your head with pride or even with semi-disbelief, and think, "Wow! I did that!" The book will be a collection of these short first person narratives. (Please note: not all submissions will result in publication) Include with the submission(s) a one-sentence description of yourself. Deadline: February 28, 1999. Send stories (preferably via email) with word count, return address, phone & email to: That Takes Ovaries! 12 Fern St, Lexington, MA 02421-6013 email: redelson@gis.net.

The Incredibly True Adventures of a Techno-Dummy in Cyberspace

By Linda Blair

Have you ever felt like an impostor stumbling around in a strange land wondering when someone is going to figure out that you really don't have a clue? That's how I feel sometimes in "Cyberspace." And when I say cyberspace, I don't just mean the "virtual" world online, but also those real-life places like parties, meetings and the like where the techsters start talking in techno-speak all around you. All of us true techno-dummies react similarly to these situations. Some of us decide this is a good time to freshen our drink, check out the buffet or hit the bathroom. Some roll their eyes and hope that an interesting fellow techno-dummy will rescue them by starting a conversation about a great novel they've just finished or movie they can't wait to see. Others of us try our darndest to listen and register all of the techno-terms flying back and forth, and maybe even say something relevant or ask a reasonably intelligent question, perhaps learning a thing or two in the process.

I've done all of these at different times. I've even frequently been responsible for facilitating meetings where significant chunks of time were devoted to discussions of web site updates, data downloads, ISP options, and even virtual banditry and Information Superhighway robbery. It's a strange balance. You've got to know enough to have some hope of following the discussion, if only to decide when to cut it off or how to wrap it up. On the other hand, a techno-dummy could easily be considered the best type of facilitator for such talk, because your outsider status keeps you on the periphery so you can't get swept up in a discussion that on it's own could perpetuate indefinitely.

I've been a techno-dummy in cyberspace for over five years now. So far, I've never been truly tempted to change my status. There's no doubt that I see the convenience and advantages of the internet. I like the way that it connects me with some friends I'd otherwise never stay in touch with and, yes, I admit it, when the postal mailbox has nothing but bills or letters for my roommate and the answering machine light isn't even blinking, I really look forward to logging on and reading what all my friends and acquaintan-

ces out there on the 'net thought I might need or want to know. But I've never really been an information or media junkie and instant access to the hodgepodge of information available on newsgroups, the world wide web, and online services, haven't made me one. Don't tell anyone, but I don't even have cable and haven't plugged in my tv since September.

Don't get me wrong, I'm not one of those who have been dragged, kicking and screaming, to the well of technology. Five years ago, when I joined the board of the Bisexual Resource Center, I was basically told that not having access to e-mail wasn't an option, since that was how the board mainly communicated between meetings. Since I had no intention of buying a computer, another board member let me borrow a 2400 baud

modem and video terminal. A video terminal is like a brainless computer. It'll let you read and send email, but there's no way to save or download files like on a computer. Not surprisingly, I felt right at home with this ancient technology because even though its capacity was very limited, it was also very simple, and unlike so many of my friends, figuring out complicated technical stuff holds no wonder for me.

Eventually, I realized that I needed to be able to

at least download files to a computer, mostly because of my then position as a co-editor of *BiWomen*. Up until then, the other co-editor had done all that cyber stuff, but she was moving away and I'd be working with a new co-editor. Plus, it was just time to add one more piece of knowledge to the technology puzzle. So I asked an acquaintance to set me up so I could access my e-mail from the computer at the BRC. She did this and also showed me how to sort e-mails from my inbox to various folders, download files from the server to the computer and more. Not being too good with these things, I took careful notes on how it was done and then promptly lost them. Consequently, I've been "cutting and pasting" entire e-mails — *BiWomen* submissions, invitations to parties, directions, personal letters from friends, you name it — screen by screen, from the e-mail



program to the word processing program ever since. And I've still never learned how to read or download a single attached file, so I'm always asking other people to "cut and paste" their letters, articles, or whatever into the body of the e-mail and resend it. All this is much more time consuming, I'm sure. But, to me it's simpler and a level of technology I can handle.

Still, I do intend to continue to slowly learn more. I've finally traded in the old borrowed video terminal for an old Macintosh IIcx, acquired a faster (but not fast) modem and gotten hooked up to the Web at home. I've even put out a call for a techno-type friend to show me how to download files, so I can save my wrist and mouse pad from wearing out from all that "cutting and pasting."

But, one step at a time. Better turn the computer off and head out to work for now. Thank goodness I'm gainfully employed at present. I wouldn't want to jeopardize my status as a techno-dummy with all that e-mailing my resume around, searching the "monster board" and other online job banks, checking out potential employers web sites and all that other tech-networking.

Author's Note: If you can manage it, you can e-mail me your own techno-dummy stories and empathies at lindab@shore.net. Come to think of it, maybe we could start an online newsgroup as a way to stick together and support each other....Nah, too complicated. :-) ▼

Cyber Age from page 1

changed a lot itself, and the communications revolution that it helped create has allowed the topic of pornography to be divided into the myriad of topics which we would today define, more positively, as human sexuality. At the height of Papal power, any discussions of human sexuality were defined as lewd and pornographic. And by the time of the Inquisition, there was a clear association of sexuality and the devil.

Along came Oscar Wilde, Sigmund Freud, Margaret Mead, and Dr. Ruth together with the radio, the paperback book, and affordable magazines. The free flow of ideas about sexuality, facilitated by these and other media, has changed society. It has forced society in general to accept that human sexuality has multiple facets, and that it need not be automatically associated with immorality. The fact that homosexuality, the female orgasm, and masturbation are now in the public vocabulary is evidence of the effect of

widespread communication about sexuality.

Let's take this thesis further. Let's consider the effect of the Internet. If communication of sexual topics is now amplified in volume of content and numbers of authors and readers, what will the consequence be? Web searching on the word "sexuality" results in thousands of site matches. Many of these sites have the type of pornographic content that social conservatives would like to control or ban. But many more contain essays, opinions, stories, and book reviews. There are countless numbers of points that internet authors want to make about sexuality and about themselves. (Check out <http://www.altsex.org>, <http://www.ejhs.org/index.htm>, <http://www.sexquest.com/index.html>, and <http://www.sexology.org/>)

I believe the consequence of this outpouring will be the further division of sexual topics into smaller and more refined categories. We will come to see sexual behavior as an endless stream of permutations. Traditional definitions will disintegrate. I believe that the increasing acceptance of bisexuality is evidence of this. It is true that many people, including some gays and lesbians, claim that bisexuality does not exist. But gradually, bisexuality is being accepted as a valid component of the queer community. I, however, see it slightly differently. I see bisexuality being not only on par with the definitions of gay and lesbian*, but also as a different perspective about the whole human sexuality issue. Indeed, I prefer the term "PoMosexual" (post-modern) to "bisexual."

I see this PoMosexual landscape as more akin to fractal geometry than a linear scale. Variations and permutations continue to evolve at all scales of magnitude. There is seemingly a different sexuality for every person born. A person may even pass through several sexualities within a lifetime. "Gay" would be a general region of the fractal landscape. So would "heterosexual." I see "bisexuality" as being both a region or regions of this landscape, and as the mindset which sees human sexuality in this way.

One hopes that this breakdown of rigid sexual classifications will continue into one where everyone is equal but different. Those days are still some distance away, but every "Chasing Amy" gets us one step closer. The anarchistic flow of ideas on the Internet can only accelerate this process. I am glad that as an Internet user and as a bisexual/pomosexual myself, I can participate in the pioneering of this social evolution.

*I will exempt comments about transgenderism and transexuality because I don't know enough about them. ▼

Call for Submissions

The year 2001 marks the twentieth anniversary of *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings By Radical Women Of Color*. For a proposed multi-genre collection of writings, editors Gloria Anzaldua and AnaLouise Keating seek essays, poems, personal narratives, fiction, stories, artwork, etc. that explore the following: What impact has *Bridge* made on individual women; on feminist/womanist theorizing, ethnic studies, or queer theory; on the academy? Has it changed your life? If you're a teacher, has it changed the lives of your students? What progress have we made? What new issues confront us today? We welcome contributions from people of all colors and genders. Abstracts (approx. 1 to 2 pages) by February 15, 1999. Papers (approximately 10 to 30 double-spaced pages for essays) by July 30, 1999. Send two copies of all submissions to: AnaLouise Keating, Languages & Literature, Eastern New Mexico University, Portales NM 88130. For information contact: analouise.keating@cnmu.edu or 505-359-1622.

Queer Activisms For a New Millennium:

Lesbian, Bisexual, Gay, and Transgender Politics in California. A conference presented by The Center for Sex Research and LesBiGay Studies at California State University, Northridge. The conference will be held August 6-9, 1999 at the Airtel Plaza Hotel in Van Nuys, California. Proposals for papers or panels addressing any of the issues above (or others appropriate for the conference theme) should be sent by February 1, 1999, to: Center for Sex Research; California State University, Northridge; Northridge, CA 91330-8318.

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boys! It's amazing to me how easy it is to influence one's children, to any point on the spectrum."

I, of course, picked up on all the inclusive queer-friendly lingo and felt perfectly comfortable writing back and sharing my own journey with her. I told her that I went to England to study my junior year and fell in love with the man who I would later marry, that I had traveled a lot in my twenties, and that after my divorce I came out as bisexual and have been mostly involved with women ever since. And that I am involved in the bi women's community in Boston and am presently nursing a broken heart from a love gone bad. I sent it off, hoping for a quick reply.

I waited a few days, then a week, then realized that almost two weeks had passed. One of the things about e-mail that you get addicted to is the sense of immediate contact and a delay in replying can foster a feeling of being snubbed. So I sent off a quick prompt, "Hey, did I scare you away or what?" And almost immediately I got a reply, "Not scared, VERY excited to hear from you! Should prob reply from home account for all those personal details." And true to her word, she soon sent me a letter from home and let me in on her own sexual identity journey.

"Well, when I seemed to be having a renewed round of schoolgirl crushes, in my mid-20's on some of my best friends, I realized they weren't just crushes! Right about the same time, I had 'met' Danny (will explain that one in a mo') and I had already decided I wasn't particular about gender one way or another. So I consider myself bi-cognito in a hetero relationship and there's no reason to think this isn't forever. Although I do joke about shakin' up with one of my dearest friends, who unfortunately at the time was married when I first met her, when the men die before us."

"Bi-cognito," I love it! So from there we swapped letters back and forth, catching up with more detail about family, friends we'd both known in high school, personal lives, our careers. We both still had a strong love for the theater, one she was passing on to her sons. We didn't write every week and, in fact, when I apologized for a gap, Nan said, "Hey, let's stop apologizing for the time lag in between e-mails, ok? Life is hectic enough without adding that burden. #8^ We're doing well simply by the fact that we can keep up a steady volley!"

Then in mid-December I got a note from Nan saying that they were coming east for Christmas and would I be in Connecticut over the holidays? Luckily, I would be at my day's in our hometown for Christmas Day and the Sunday after. We made arrangements to meet up.

After twenty years of not seeing someone,

could you pick them out in a diner? Well, fortunately, we could. Nan used to have light brown, straight-as-spaghetti hair down to her tush (there it is again) and even though it is now a short spiky cut, I couldn't mistake her deep, intense eyes and heavy eyebrows. I, too, had had the long hair parted in the middle (it was the 70s, man), though mine was the unruly, curly sort. And she picked me out easily too, despite the short hair and the glasses.

She brought her husband and two boys along and the five of us hunkered into a booth for almost two hours. After all that time, it was comfortable and friendly and it was nice to feel a good connection to her husband, too. She had described her family as "living nose-to-nose" and I could easily see the physical and emotional comfort between them all. After chatting about all sorts of things we both agreed it was a good thing we did this. I said I was hoping to visit Seattle in the coming year and would love to visit them. And they confessed that they were planning to relocate back east within the next few years to get out of the closed-minded Christian Right community they are living in. So there will be opportunities to keep the connection alive.

I'm not a Cyber Evangelist. I have a lot of issues around the way people use the distancing qualities of the medium. But getting that e-mail out of the blue was such a special thing, and having the opportunity to reconnect to Nan after all this time has been a gift. I'm sure many of you readers have the experience of finding out later that a very close friend has come out as queer and you wonder if that was part of the comfort of your past relationship with that person. I like it a lot that Nan is in touch with her bi-energy and that we're now able to share those feelings. And I still have that vision of us bumping our butts and hips together in the school cafeteria, in those hip-hugging bell-bottoms and the thick leather belts, all that long hair swaying to the beat. Who knew! ▽

Kissed a Girl

By Shannon Morse

I longed for a new love
A tea bag for my cup
And he was there steeping so I drank him up.
I longed for a new life,
That belonged to me
So I threw him away and then I was free.
I longed for a new path
To give it a whirl
And you were there waiting.
So I kissed a girl.



The Third Annual BBWN Holiday House Party was a big success, much to the credit of the fabulous artists who entertained us. L to R: Annie Goglia, [redacted] Lynn Rosenbaum, Amatul Hannan, Meg Wright, Anoosh Jorjorian, and emcee for the evening Amy Wyeth.

And the amazing hostesses for three years running, Amy Wyeth and [redacted] You two are incredible, thank you for being BBWN's Hostessing Divas!!!!



Photos by Ellyn Ruthstrom

Queer Student Conference

The Fifth Northeast Regional Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender College Student Leadership Conference, "A Call to Freedom," will be held March 4-6, 1999 at the University of New Hampshire (UNH) in Durham, NH. Check www.unh.edu/taskforce-glb/calendar.html for more information.

BBWN Financial Statement, January 1 through December 31, 1998

Balance forward 1/1/98: \$3407.12

Expenses		Income	
Printing newsletter	1966.59	Dues	2145.00
Postage	1243.18	Advertising	160.00
Merchandise (buttons)	1262.75	Merchandise	532.70
Postal fees	85.00	Bank Interest	28.25
Event expenses	413.41	Donations	120.00
Space rental	55.00	Event income	493.76
Parking	23.50	Total income:	4700.38
Phone	7.25	Balance as of 12/31/98	3050.82
Total expenses	5056.68	Submitted by Robyn Ochs, Treasurer for BBWN	

PFLAG Annual Dinner

The Greater Boston chapters of PFLAG will hold their third annual Recognition Dinner on Saturday, March 20, 1999 at the Boston Tremont Hotel. PFLAG will be honoring Sgt. Norman Hill of the Boston Police Department to recognize his efforts as the liaison to the police commission on queer issues. Two Massachusetts high school seniors who are members of GSA or GLBT groups will be presented with \$1000 scholarships that evening. For tickets and more information, call 978-562-4176.

Boston's Bisexual Resource Center Receives Community Service Award From NGLTF

The Bisexual Resource Center (BRC) received the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force's Community Service Award in November at the Creating Change Conference in Philadelphia for service to the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered communities. This is the first time that a bisexual organization has won the prestigious award.

Kerry Lobel, NGLTF's Executive Director, presented the award to the Boston activists and recognized BRC's contributions in educating both the heterosexual and homosexual communities about bisexuality and other forms of sexual diversity. In her remarks, she praised the wide variety of resources about bisexuality that the BRC provides, including the Bisexual Resource Guide, the

www.biresource.org website, the phone, mail, and e-mail information services, and speakers on bisexual issues. She acknowledged the BRC's success in building a strong community through hosting local support groups, organizing the watershed Fifth International Conference on Bisexuality this spring, and working in alliance with the Multicultural AIDS Coalition and the Fenway Community Health Center, and thanked the BRC for its efforts to further progressive social change.

Wayne Bryant, international bi conference organizer and BRC Board member, thanked NGLTF for the award and said, "The award shows how bisexual and transgender issues, and indeed issues of sexual freedom in general, are now being seen as core issues by progressive national gay and lesbian rights groups. At the same time, it recognizes how much energy bisexual people have contributed to the advancement of human rights."

Other recipients of this year's awards included Patricia Cramer, whose rural Pennsylvania bar (the Casa Nova) has been subject to continuous protests, harassment, and violent attacks by the KKK and other conservative groups for over a year, and the Audre Lorde Center in New York. ▽



Wayne Bryant, on left, receiving award from NGLTF's Executive Director Kerry Lobel. Unidentified guy in middle.

Announcing the New Bisexual Resource Guide 2000

Editor Robyn Ochs and Boston's Bisexual Resource Center are thrilled and proud to present the 3rd edition of the Bisexual Resource Guide. Two years in the making, the guide is expanded to over 300 pages, with 2100+ listings from 49 countries.

Special Features Include:

- ◆ An expanded Bi-Bibliography with guide to non-fiction reference by subject perfect for researchers and students
- ◆ Updated and expanded Bi Film Guide
- ◆ Bi Resources on the Internet

To order, send check or money order for \$11.95 (payable to BRC) with your name and address to BRC, P.O. Box 400639, Cambridge, MA 02140. You can also purchase on the web at www.biresource.org.



Movie Review: *You've Got Mail*

Reviewed by Ellyn Ruthstrom

I decided to review *You've Got Mail* for its relevance to the cyber topic, certainly not because of its queer content. On the whole the movie is straight, mainstream, and very, very Hollywood. But the way they use e-mail within the plot offers an opportunity to discuss how it has entered our popular culture and how it has affected our mating rituals, if it really has.

In the last *Dykes to Watch Out For* cartoon of 1998, Sparrow and Stu accidentally discover that Sydney is having an online affair with another woman, and Mo (Sydney's girlfriend) doesn't appear to know about it. At the New Year's Eve gathering that includes all concerned parties, Lois provocatively raises the question "Extra-curricular Sex — is it cheating if it's only virtual?" *You've Got Mail* asks the same question.

At the start of the film, we are introduced to Joe Fox (Tom Hanks), and Kathleen Kelly (Meg Ryan) as two people who are each living with a partner (played by Parker Posey and Greg Kinnear) who they obviously don't love and who they can barely wait to scoot out the door in the morning so they can get online to have some "real" communication with each other. So are these two lovely cupie-faced characters "cheating" on their partners?


The film basically answers that question "No" by keeping their discussions non-sexual and by having Joe (e-mail name is "ny152") and Kathleen (e-mail name is "shopgirl") break up with their partners so that they can cleanly go on to meet their online interests. Except for the fact that they already know each other in real life, and they don't like each other. Joe happens to be a wealthy chain bookstore magnate and Kathleen is the humble owner of a children's bookstore around the corner from Joe's newest megastore. We get to see the double lives both of the characters live for a while, as they go head-to-head in business, but keep getting closer through their online correspondence.

And here is where another of the emotional dilemmas of e-mail comes in. Can you find true love on e-mail and can the anonymity of it allow you to reveal yourself deeply to the other person? You can tell I'm not really sold on this because my first question is: can anonymous

communication be considered truly intimate? If intimacy is at its heart about trust, is it intimacy when you don't know *who* you are trusting? And, if you do trust someone who is unknown to you, does it follow that you could trust them if or when they do become known to you? I'm not saying that anonymous communication is unreal, but I don't see it as intimate.

I'm sure many of you have knowledge of both good and bad love stories from online experiences. I know of someone who "fell in love" three times online and had her heart smashed each time she would rendezvous in person with her sweetheart. Whatever world they created in words and immediate responses didn't hold up when they stood face-to-face.


But this is Hollywood, folks, and e-mail is just another vehicle to bring people together for a happy ending. The second half of *You've Got Mail* fell apart for me because Joe is allowed to hold all the power of the relationship. He gets to know who Kathleen is but she doesn't get to know who he is until the very end. And when she realizes that he has had all the power, Nora Ephron (the director and screenwriter) has the gall to have Kathleen smile and accept it without a wisp of anger or betrayal.

I'm sure that e-mail is going to figure in many more Hollywood movies, and that the not-so-cheery side of the faceless medium will be probed. This comic attempt was, for me, fairly lame because it chose to reinforce the patriarchal power on top of the new technology. Will we *ever* be free of it? 



Check Out *BiWomen* on the Web!

BBWN has a newly expanded web site at www.biresource.org/bbwn. The site is now being updated to include: a complete list of articles from current and recent past *BiWomen* issues; a "spotlight" theme article from each featured issue; a list of upcoming *BiWomen* themes; information on how to submit and subscribe to *BiWomen*; our current calendar of hot n' happening events; and info on how to subscribe to the newly forming BBWN-chat and BBWN-events e-mail lists coming soon to a server near you! (See page 10.)

Help us spread the word by telling all your friends who you think would enjoy reading *BiWomen* to check us out on the Web and subscribe! All our readers are highly encouraged to drop a note in our electronic suggestion box with themes you'd like to see covered. Just e-mail us from the website at biwomen@biresource.org. 

Nominate Notable Women of the 20th Century

The National Women's History Project is marking the millennium by developing a list of 100 Notable Women of the 20th Century and they are asking for nominations. Each of the women selected must have put a significant stamp on the course of United States history, affected the lives of a large number of people, made her major contributions during the 20th Century, and made a positive and lasting impact on society. The 100 women selected will represent a variety of fields: politics/equal rights, medicine, science/technology, business, the arts, education, military/peace, business, religion, athletics, the environment, the media, among others. The final list will also reflect America's racial and ethnic diversity. Biographies of the women, along with a timeline and a variety of articles and essays celebrating women in the 20th century will be published in a special gazette entitled 1900-2000, An Exceptional Century for Women. Deadline for nominations is March 1. Send nominations e-mail to nwhp@aol.com, fax to 707-838-0478, or to NWHP, 7738 Bell Rd, Windsor, CA, 95492-8518.

Feminist Journal By and About Women of Color

Meridians, a new feminist journal featuring scholarship and creative work by and about women of color, is seeking submissions for its premier issue in 2000. Submissions can be essays, interviews, poetry, fiction, theater pieces, artwork, photoessays, and position papers. Three copies of the manuscript and three copies of an abstract of not more than 150 words MUST be submitted together. Send to: Meridians, Smith College, Northampton, MA 01063. For detailed writers' guidelines see www.smith.edu/meridians or contact Meridians@Smith.edu or call 413-585-3390.

BBWN Starts New E-mail Lists For BiWomen!

BBWN will be launching three brand new e-mail lists to help meet the needs of bi and bi-friendly women to talk, network, share, and laugh together as well as to plan and publicize fun and fulfilling events and programs in the Boston-area. BBWN's new on-line line-up includes:

bbwn-events - A listing of events for or of interest to members of the Boston Bisexual Women's Network and other self-identified bi and bi-friendly women in and around the Boston area.

bbwn-activist - A list for self-identified women in the Boston area who would like to help plan, shape, and implement events, programs, actions, and policies of the Boston Bisexual Women's Network.

bbwn-chat - A discussion list for members of the Boston Bisexual Women's Network and other bi and bi-friendly self-identified women.

To subscribe to any of these new lists, send e-mail to: lastname-request@lists.home.welcomehome.org (replace lastname with either **bbwn-events** or **bbwn-activist** or **bbwn-chat** depending on which list you are subscribing to) and include only the command "subscribe" (without the quotes) in the body of the message.

We hope to hear from you on-line!

Bi Related Newsgroups



This is a short listing of some bi related newsgroups that are available online.

soc.bi

Discussions of bisexuality

soc.women.lesbian-and-bi

Lives of lesbian and bisexual women. (Moderated)

soc.support.youth.gay-lesbian-bi

Gay youths helping each other. (Moderated)

alt.personals.bi

Personals by or seeking bisexuals.

alt.personals.motss

Personals seeking members of the same sex.

alt.polyamory

For those with multiple loves.

alt.personals.poly

Multiple loves personals.

soc.support.transgendered

Transgendered and intersexed persons.



Advertise in BiWomen!!

Want to reach over 500 bi and bi-friendly readers across the country? Promote your business and support BiWomen.

Just \$15 per issue, \$40 for three issues. To advertise in BiWomen send your ad to: P.O. Box 400639, Cambridge, MA 02140 or call (617) 424-9595.

Show your VISIBILITY with buttons!

Two roads
diverged in a
yellow wood...
and I took both

HATE IS
NOT
A FAMILY
VALUE

Other designs include:

- If God had meant for people to be bisexual there would be two sexes
- I'm bisexual and I'm NOT attracted to you
- Racism, sexism, homophobia — Recognize the Connections
- Bisexual Pride
- VISIBILITY

Please send \$2.00 per button (includes postage) to:
BBWN, P.O. Box 400639, Cambridge, MA 02140

CALENDAR *continued from page 12*

pay for the space. The group meets in the library at the Boston Living Center at 29 Stanhope St. in Boston. Dial 1 to be buzzed in. For more information, call 617-424-9595 and leave a message for Ananda or Maria Christina.

March 2 ♦ Tuesday

Bi Rap at the Women's Center, 7:30-9:00 p.m. Call 617-354-8807 for topic.

March 3 ♦ Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m. See February 3rd.

March 7 ♦ Sunday

Bi Space, 7-9 p.m. First hour's topic: "Bisexuals and Community." See February 7th.

March 10 ♦ Wednesday

Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting, 7-9 p.m. All bi community members are welcome and encouraged to attend. The meeting is at 29 Stanhope St. in Back Bay.

March 12 ♦ Friday

BiWomen Submissions Deadline. This issue's theme is "Heartache and Healing." Send articles (on any topic), calendar entries, letters, art, news and views to: *BiWomen*, P.O. Box 400639, Cambridge, MA 02140 or email to eruthstr@mail.lesley.edu.

March 13 ♦ Saturday

Singing Night at Linda's in Roslindale, 7:00. Join us for a night of song and laughter at Linda's in Roslindale. Whether you're a star soloist or you



couldn't carry a tune in a paper bag, you'll be welcome. We've got one guitarist lined up, but please bring other instruments. Whatever music style, we'll try anything. Please bring any song books that you can. Snacks and beverages are also welcome. Call or e-mail Linda at 617-327-1407 or lindab@shore.net for info.

March 14 ♦ Sunday

Brunch/Matinee, Noon ish. We'll find a good movie to see (most likely spot is at the Kendall Cinema) and go out to eat afterwards. If interested, call Ellyn at 617-926-8737 and let her know.

March 16 ♦ Tuesday

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m. See February 3rd.

March 17 ♦ Wednesday

BBWN Introductory Meeting. A safe space for women to connect with the bisexual community. 7:30 - 9 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. Info: 617-354-8807.

March 20 ♦ Saturday

Biversity Brunch, 11:30. Meet at China Pearl, 9 Tyler St. in Boston, for Dim Sum.

Biversity Planning Meeting. Immediately following the brunch at China Pearl Dim Sum. Help plan events for the April/May calendar.

Biversity Games Night at Linda's, 7:00 p.m. Bring a game, a friend, or something to munch on, or all

three. We'll share fun and games at Linda's in Roslindale. T accessible. Call 617-327-1407 or e-mail lindab@shore.net for directions.

March 21 ♦ Sunday

BBWN Brunch/Literary Salon, 11:30. Come on over to Watertown for this month's brunch at Ellyn's. We'll eat, chat, and relax for a while. Then, for those who would like, we will read poetry and short fiction aloud; bring writing (even your own) that you would like to share with others. Call Ellyn for directions, 926-8737.



March 22 ♦ Monday

Serve Dinner at the Living Center, 5-7:30 p.m. The bi community is volunteering to help serve dinner for members of the Boston Living Center, the HIV/AIDS service organization where the Bi Office is located. The work is easy, the staff is friendly, the cause is good, and your dinner is free. Contact Wesley as soon as you know you're available at 617-441-3573 or by email at wlt@shore.net to volunteer.

March 23 ♦ Tuesday

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m. (see February 3rd)

Bi Rap at the Women's Center, 7:30-9:00 p.m. Call 354-8807 for topic.

March 28 ♦ Sunday

Biversity Brunch, 11:30. Club Cafe buffet. Nearest T is Back Bay on the Orange Line.

Bisexual People of Color Potluck Dinner, 5-7 p.m. Boston Living Center, 29 Stanhope St.

March 30 ♦ Tuesday

BBWN Pre-mailing Dinner, 6 p.m. at Bertucci's on Stanhope St., just two doors down from the Bi Office.

BiWomen mailing, 7-9 p.m. at the Bi Office. Label, stuff, and lick. Actually the licking is *after* the mailing. Ha! Join us.

Biversity Boston is the mixed gender bisexual Network of Greater Boston.

Ongoing Events

4th Sundays:

Bi People of Color, 5-7 p.m. at the Boston Living Center, 29 Stanhope St. For info call 617-424-9595.

1st & 3rd

Thursdays:

Bi Women's Resource & Support Group, 7:00 p.m. at the Women's Health Consortium, 379 State St., Portsmouth, NH. For info call 603-431-1669 or contact Sue Corcoran at schmoo@nh.ultranet.com.

NEWS FLASH!

A new women's night has started on Sundays at the Lava Bar in Kenmore Square, 575 Commonwealth Ave. at the Howard Johnson's. It has its own entrance. Quick before they close!!

BiWomen Subscription Form

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE (Optional) _____

_____ New Subscriber _____ Renewal

SUBSCRIPTION RATE (sliding scale)

_____ \$0-\$20 (pay what you can)

_____ \$20-\$30 (suggested)

_____ \$30-\$100

THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

BBWN

P.O. BOX 400639

Cambridge, MA 02140

The "Bi Office"

is the Bisexual Resource Center, located at 29-33 Stanhope Street, behind Club Cafe, right next door to Bertucci's and just down the street from the Hard Rock Cafe. For info call 617-424-9595.

Ongoing Events

1st & 3rd Tuesdays:

Bi Women's Rap. 7:30 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St, Cambridge. For info and discussion topics call 617-354-8807.

Wednesdays:

Gendertalk. 8:30-9:30 p.m. on WMBR 88.1 FM. Deals with transgender and queer issues.

2nd Thursdays: Single Jewish Lesbian and Bisexual Women's Group. 6:30-8 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant Street. Info: 617-499-9612

Bi Married Women's Support Group. 7-9 p.m. at the Bi Office. For bi women who are married to or in a relationship with a man. Call Debbie at 617-731-9060 for info.

3rd Thursdays: SpeakOut Meeting. 8 p.m., at the Boston Living Center, 29-33 Stanhope St, Boston. Wheelchair accessible. General meeting at 6:45 p.m., theme program starts at 8 p.m. Info: 617-354-0133.

CALENDAR

February 2 ♦ Tuesday

Bi Rap at the Women's Center, 7:30-9 p.m. Discussion group open to all bi-friendly women. Tonight's topic is "PoMo Sexuality and breakdown of categories." Call 617-354-8807 for info.

February 3 ♦ Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual. 7-9 p.m. An informal support group for people who think they may be bisexual or attracted to more than one sex. A small donation is requested to help pay for the space. The group meets at the Bisexual Resource Center at 29 Stanhope St. in Boston. Call 617-424-9595 for info.

February 6 ♦ Saturday

Dance Fever: Winter Dance for Women, 8 p.m.-1 a.m. at the Knights of Columbus Hall, 323 Washington St., Brighton Center. \$10 cover, cash bar, no smoking. Info: 781-648-0722.

February 7 ♦ Sunday

BBWN Brunch, Noon. This month we will be heading out to Dedham to Ellen's home. If it is a good day, we'll be able to stroll around the pond and into the woods. Call for directions, 781-329-5396.

Valentine's Day Open House at Grand Opening, Noon-6 p.m. Shop early for yourself or for that special someone. Wear a heart and receive a free gift! 318 Harvard St., Brookline, 617-731-2626.



Bi Space. 7-9 p.m. at the Bi Office. A friendly discussion space to meet other bisexuals and talk about bisexual issues. Our topic for the first hour will be "Bisexual Parenting." A \$2 donation is requested to help pay for the space. BiSpace is at the Bisexual Resource Center at 29 Stanhope St. in Boston. Dial 1 to be buzzed in.

February 9 ♦ Tuesday

Bi Rap social night. Call the Women's Center for info about what the group will be doing. 617-354-8807.

February 10 ♦ Wednesday

Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting, 7-9 p.m. All bi community members are welcome and encouraged to attend. The meeting is at 29 Stanhope St. in Back Bay.

February 16 ♦ Tuesday

Bi Rap at the Women's Center. 7:30-9:00 p.m. Tonight's topic is "Queer Literature" (See February 2nd).

Coming Out as Bisexual 7-9pm (see February 3rd)

February 19 ♦ Friday

Games Night, 7:00-11:30 p.m. At Treehouse (Jay and Tigris's residence in Jamaica Plain). In addition to having games (Trivial Pursuit, Jenga, and lots more) we'll have some toys to play with - fidget toys,

puzzles, construction sets. Bring your own games and toys if you like. It's never too late to have a carefree childhood. Call 524-6984 or email rsvp@aq.org for directions.

February 19-21 ♦ Friday-Sunday



Winter Gender-Free Dance Camp. Held at the Becket/Chimney Corners YMCA Camp, sponsored by the Lavender Country & Folk Dancers. Contact Jim

LaBonte for information, 781-642-7544, jbdakota@ix.netcom.com.

February 20 ♦ Saturday

Biversity Brunch, 11:30 a.m. Brunch will be at Doyle's in Jamaica Plain.

BRC Office Volunteer Training, 2-5 p.m. Anyone who would like to learn about staffing the bi office and the phone can attend. Please call Maria Christina for information, 617-277-2017.

February 21 ♦ Sunday

Brunch/Matinee, Noon ish. We'll find a good movie to see (most likely spot is at the Kendall Cinema) and go out to eat afterwards. If interested, call Ellyn at 617-926-8737 and let her know.

Bisexuality for the Bi-Curious Woman, 7:30-9:30 p.m. at Grand Opening. A workshop to explore the physical and emotional aspects of being with a woman. \$20. Women only. 318 Harvard St., Brookline. Call 617-731-2626.

February 23 ♦ Tuesday

Bi Rap social night. Call the Women's Center for info about what the group will be doing. 617-354-8807.

February 25-28 ♦ Thursday-Sunday

OutWrite '99, "Our Writing Our Culture, Our Lives" at the Boston Park Plaza. Hundreds of queer writers gather for national conference. Call 617-262-6969 for information.



Saturday night dance party in the Imperial Plaza Ballroom at the Park Plaza, 9:30 p.m.-2:00 a.m. Drag show with Drag King Dred and Mizery at 10:00. \$10 advance, \$15 at the door.

February 28 ♦ Sunday

Biversity Brunch, 11:30, meet at Buddha II in Brookline.

Bisexual People of Color Potluck Dinner, 5-7 p.m. Join other bisexual people of color for a potluck dinner and discussion group. A small donation is requested to help

CALENDAR continues on page 11

Heartache & Healing

Healing That Broken Heart

Editor's Note: How do you heal a broken heart? I have interspersed some responses to this question from some BBWN members along with some quotes from a recent *In Style* magazine.

After a romance fails, I usually shut off the entire world, and do the "drama queen" bit for about a week or two. After one break up, I put Natalie Merchant's "Tigerlily" CD ("My Beloved Wife" makes for great drama) on my computer and played repetitive, mindless video games, singing all the tragic songs for about a week. Then, I woke up one day, and I was fine; never to mourn again.

Wendy

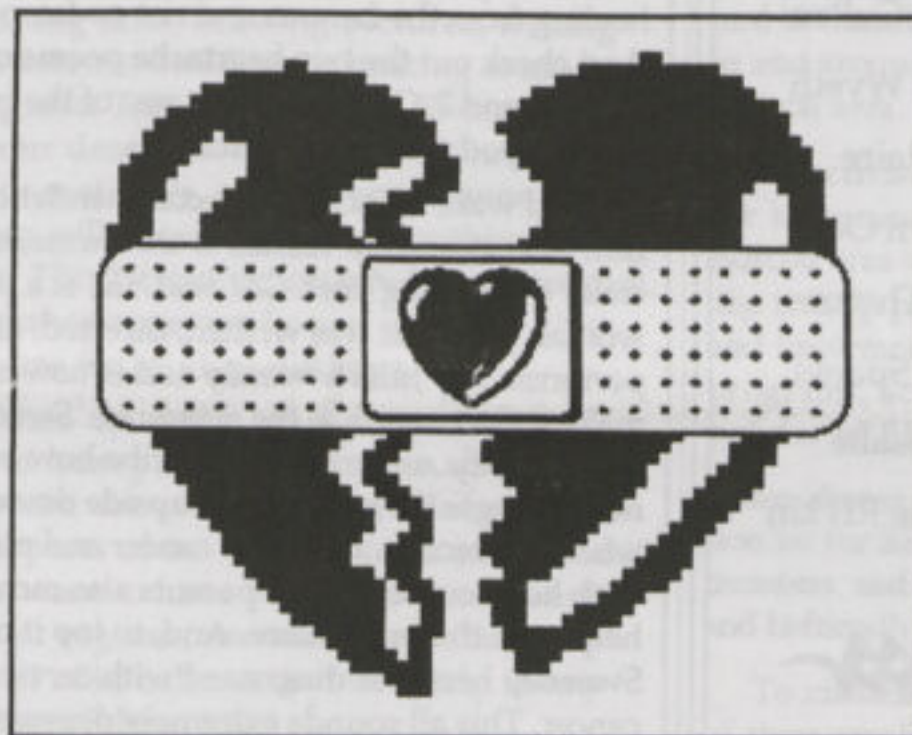
About a month ago, I was thinking about my former lover and feeling really bitter toward him. Since I'm a Pagan, I didn't want that negative energy flowing out of me 'cause I knew it would come back. I kept saying to myself that I HAD to forgive him and move on or I'll never get over him and all the pain he caused me. I was reading *UTNE Reader's* current issue about forgiveness. I decided that my ex had hurt me in so many ways that what he'd done was UNFORGIVEABLE. I don't forgive him and I cannot. This realization has brought me so much peace. The bitterness is gone. The inner conflict is gone. About a week after my revelation, my ex called me to wish me a "happy birthday." I thanked him, told him I hope he's happy, and has a good life. No bitchyness, just honesty. He's not a part of my life anymore and in the past month I've grown so much as a person. I am over my heartache.

Abby

Particularly in high school and college, the key for me was in music. I would take twenty albums and start with the most suicidal music I could think of, and you just sort of let it lift you back toward normalcy. Start with Janis Ian's "At 17" — you want someone whose life is worse than yours — then wind up with someone like Barry Manilow."

Jason Alexander

Healing continues on page 5



This Terrible Thing... and how I deal with it each time it happens

By Amy Wyeth

10/17/93: I cannot be alone, because whenever I am I just cry and get depressed and think about how things SHOULD be, how I don't deserve this terrible thing. I was just writing about it above, and I couldn't write anymore and started to cry & was crying for about 15 minutes when Reggie called. I told him I'd just gotten out of a relationship, though I didn't say what kind. He had asked if I was sick (I guess I sounded choked up or sniffly), so I figured, the hell with it, he's nice — at least I can be honest with him about the relationship part. Maybe one day I'll be able to be honest about what KIND of relationship.

At the beginning of the computer age for me (1993 was the same year I got my first e-mail account) I filled a computer disk with journal entries including the one above. Five and a half years ago when my girlfriend, a former college classmate, broke off our year-long relationship. This was my most intense relationship to date, the kind that is marked

Terrible continues on page 5

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Volunteers of the Month

Debbie Block-
Schwenk

Linda Blair

Ellen Cullen

Amy Wyeth

Claire

Robyn Ochs

Elle Thomas

Rosalie



*And many more
wonderful
women! You
know who you
are! Thank you,
thank you, thank
you!*

Thanks again!

BiWomen is published bi-
monthly.

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Where is the Heartache?

This issue's theme, "Heartache and Healing," did not inspire the response that I had hoped. As several people mentioned to me, perhaps heartache is just too damn sad to write about for such an intimate audience. On page 1 Amy Wyeth shares her experience with recovering from her first relationship with a woman, and I laced together a sampling of recipes for healing from the famous and not-so-famous. And check out the two heartache poems on pages 4 and 7. Otherwise, the rest of the issue is a hodgepodge of other articles.

I did want to include a recommendation of a film that somewhat relates to the theme, especially the healing part. *God Said, Ha!* is a one-woman play that was written, directed, and performed by Julia Sweeney and is now a film making the rounds of the arthouses. Sweeney uses a gentle comic wit to describe how her newly single life gets turned upside down when her brother develops cancer and moves in with her. Soon after, her parents also move in to help with their son's care. And, to top it off, Sweeney herself is diagnosed with cervical cancer. This all sounds extremely depressing, but Sweeney describes the family situations in such a way you have to laugh — and you know she had to laugh too to make it through to this side of the anger and grief.

One of the most hilarious parts of the movie is when she describes how her doctors repositioned her ovaries during her hysterectomy — and then can't seem to find one of them later on. Before the operation she is informed by her doctors that she could have some of her eggs fertilized so that later on she can have a child by using a surrogate mother. "Oh, great! Now I have to meet a guy *and* a girl!" *God Said, Ha!* is at the Coolidge Corner in Brookline this week; I don't know how long it will stay.

If you have spring fever like I do, you must be chomping at the bit to spend as much time outside as possible. If you've got an idea for a BBWN outing to do something outdoorsy this spring or summer, leave us a message at the bi office, 617-424-9595, or e-mail me (eruthstr@mail.lesley.edu) with your ideas.

Ellyn Ruthstrom

The Boston Bisexual Women's Network is a feminist, not-for-profit collective organization whose purpose is to bring women together for support and validation. It is meant to be a safe environment in which women of all sexual self-identities, class backgrounds, racial, ethnic and religious groups, ages, abilities and disabilities are welcome. Through the vehicles of discussion, support, education, outreach, political action and social groups related to bisexuality, we are committed to the goals of full acceptance as bisexuals within the gay and lesbian community, and to full acceptance of bisexuality and the liberation of all gay people within the larger society.

Next in Bi Women:

The *BiWomen* theme for June/July is:

Children

Are you bisexual *and* a mom? Are you a child of a bisexual? Do you *not* want to have children? How do you come out to children? And at what age? What is a bisexual childhood? How did you experience your bisexuality as a child? This is a big topic, hope you will contribute!

DEADLINE: May 7, 1999

Future Issues in 1999

August/September: Seduction



Please Submit to *BiWomen*!

Send articles, calendar entries, letters, black-and-white art, news, and views to:

BiWomen

P.O. Box 400639

Cambridge, MA 02140

or via e-mail to eruthstr@mail.lesley.edu.

*If you do not want your name published,
please tell us.*

All articles and art appearing in
this newsletter are copyrighted
by the authors and artists.

BAFFLED Conference to be Held in Los Angeles in August

A creative bunch of bi folk in L.A. have decided to put on a conference like no one has ever seen before. It's called BAFFLED, an anti-conference if you will, standing for: The Bi-sexual Arts & Film Festival, Literature, Entertainment, and Drama. It is scheduled for Saturday, August 21, 1999 at the beautiful new Ed Gould Gay and Lesbian Center in Hollywood, California. The sole purpose: To create, encourage, and inspire bisexual art, culture, and creativity.

This is a gathering where we want the old-timers who go to many of these conferences to actually have fun going to some of the seminars! This is a challenge for many of us who have given the same old lectures to do something different with our material that is audi-

Study on "Minority Wannabes" Includes Bisexuals

In a November/December 1998 *Harvard Magazine* article, Dr. Judith White's work on horizontal hostility by minority groups toward "wannabes" was described. Horizontal hostility can be, for example, the experience of a light-skinned black person who isn't seen as "black enough," or a deaf person who uses oral language rather than ASL may not be seen as "deaf enough." Or, in the case that many of us are familiar with, a bisexual person who is not seen as "gay enough."

In one of White's studies, they showed a selection of nature photographs by a variety of different artists to a sampling of viewers of varying sexualities and asked them to judge the artists' work. A bio accompanying the work described each artist's sex and sexuality. The researchers found that bisexual observers gave the gay or lesbian artist an average of 5.9 (on a scale of 0-9) and straight artists an average of 4.6. However, gay or lesbian observers scored bisexual artists at 5.2, straight artists at 5.0, and lesbian or gay artists at 5.9. White noted that the bi artists did not gain a benefit from being "similar" to gays and lesbians.

White also noted, "People take pride in their minority identity, even if their group is stigmatized by mainstream society — and they show us that pride by trying to hold off those they consider 'wannabes.'" White sees some of the hostility coming from a competition over resources, but some of it is simply about the power of identity. ▽

ence-involving, and fun. It has to be interactive and creative. Absolutely no whole-lecture sessions or all-panel Q&As. The audiences must participate in "doing" something more than sitting in a circle and talking. Creativity is key. Doing something creative and different with your lecture notes, creating situations for people to be in, doing skits, drawing pictures, writing down items, building or making something, etc. Think differently. Please include in your description if you need limited sign up, or materials, and the conference organizers will accommodate everything possible. Think creative, original, and bisexual. Workshops are two hours, or forty-five minutes for mini-workshops.

Come up with a workshop idea, or if not, at least plan on joining us, or spread the word about it. We want this to spread to all parts of the country (and world), so if folks want to have BAFFLED conferences in their regions, we welcome it for the spread of bi culture, and will help in any way possible!

For more information about the conference, contact Michael Szymanski at BAFFLED, 6770 Milner Rd, Hollywood, CA 90068-3215; 323-969-0328 or FAX: 323-876-2566; or MikeSzy@aol.com. The deadline for workshop ideas is listed as April 1, 1999, but the information got out late so there may be more time. ▽

Come online with BBWN!

BBWN has three new online lists for you to participate on.

bbwn-events is a listing of events for or of interest to BBWN members and other bi and bi-friendly women in and around the Boston area.

bbwn-activist is a list for bi women in the Boston area who would like to help plan, shape, and implement events, programs, actions, and policies of BBWN.

bbwn-chat is a discussion list for BBWN members and other bi and bi-friendly women.

To subscribe to any of these new lists, send e-mail to: lastname-request@lists.home.welcomehome.org (replace lastname with name of list you are subscribing to) and include only the command "subscribe" (without the quotes) in the body of the message.



Photo: Natalie Rivkin

Members of BBWN taking a chilly walk around the pond after brunching at Ellen's.

Women of Color Summit

NOW Northeast Region is sponsoring the Women of Color and Allies Summit in Albany, New York on June 5-6, 1999. The theme is "Celebrating Our Sisterhood" and will focus on creating future strategies on issues of race, class, and gender as we move into the new millenium. Featured speakers will include Marcia Gillespie, Editor of *Ms. Magazine* and Marian Kramer, President of the National Welfare Rights Union. Contact the Boston NOW office for more information at 617-232-1017.

"a bottle of wine for one is so divine" By [REDACTED]

to be july again...
and have less darkness to hide under
— writing poetry inside matchbook covers
for girls that will never read it
but will gladly take the matches
to light their cigarettes
and they look like sexy dragons
with the smoke trailing from their nostrils...
gently falling on their chests...
maybe i need to be more like smoke
...to be able to please them
and lay upon sacred places
that can't be reached with touch
but must be claimed without sound...
so i light up my own cigarette
hoping it will show me the way
but i inhale too deeply
looking less sleek than they do
because they don't do it for the nicotine
to them it's just a show...
while i'm just a junkie
but i'm sure they have other vices
that make them look ugly too
so i start focusing on their noses...
searching for their sugar fix
but now i'm staring...
and must appear rude
when i'm actually more like a bengal tiger
...someone to be cautious of
...a temptress striped with beauty
seeking only something

to get me through the day
— dodging puddles of cliches and awful
rhymes
that make my teeth clench
until i laugh...
thinking that Bukowski would feel the same
way
but people here wouldn't know his name...
nevermind his genius—
if they could only hold off papa bear's hand
...for a second
they'd feel the validity of words
and know the surge of comfort-or sorrow
that can come from a pen
— they'd wipe off their lipstick
...sleep during the day
ignoring the ring of the phone
while they got used to watching bad late
night TV
...and enjoying it
they'd fall in love with solitude-
kiss loneliness and heartache
because all these things are divine
and poets are the only ones
not blind to these charms
so as i mash out the last of my cigarette
into a cheap plastic ashtray
i decide to forget about the dragons...
and their selfishness and go home
to embrace my solitude

Bisexual Celebrity Weds With Panache *and* Politics

By Ellyn Ruthstrom

Most people paging through the celebrity wedding issue of *In Style* magazine could have missed the political nature of Kathy Najimy and Dan Finnery's wedding if they just looked at the pictures. But the article did a wonderful job describing the nuptials of the bisexual star of *Veronica's Closet*. As a feminist, I was envious of her having Gloria Steinem officiate at the ceremony; as a bisexual, Steinem's words were even more important.



She noted that the couple was happy to be celebrating their own marriage but felt sadness that their gay friends (among them Ellen DeGeneres and Anne Heche) did not share that legal right.



RuPaul blessed the room with sage; Melissa Etheridge sang "Ave Maria" and "Let's Stay Together;" and Betty, the queer/feminist accapella group, performed at the reception.

As the traditional season of straight brides and grooms gets into full swing soon, it is really refreshing to see a very visible bisexual have a joyous day AND make a statement at the same time. ▼

Terrible from page 1

by food going bad in your own refrigerator because you spend so much time at the other person's house.

To complicate matters, the end of this year-long relationship coincided with the beginning of my attempted tenure in graduate school in the midwest. I had been there only a month, knew no one well, and was unwilling to compromise my start-up friendships with anything but gender-free details of a relationship whose seriousness I downplayed in front of them. I trivialized the end of my relationship, and corresponding academic difficulties, with nonspecific references to colleagues such as "I feel like a steamroller is going over me at the same time as the rug has been pulled out from under me."

Conventional wisdom says the "right one" only comes along once or twice in our lives. I didn't believe another "right one" would ever come along or that time would heal my heart. And, of course, having to hide the details of my breakup to immediate friends made my heartache last longer than it needed to (works the same way as hiding any disappointment).


It's no secret that being open about your feelings, in a safe environment, is the fastest way to healing. If all of us were lucky enough to have that safe environment when we needed it, what a different and better place the world would be.

Since complete openness with friends close by was not an option for me during my first breakup, I dealt with the relationship's end by being open with my computer journal. It's a good record and has taught me a lot about the kind of person I am and how I deal with adversity, a process which has remained remarkably consistent since I first recorded it. In addition to frequent journal writing, when I have a major disappointment I get involved in too many activities to avoid "loneliness." For example,

11/1/93: Then later Reggie invited me over for pizza w/him and some of his friends, so I went and had a good time. Also, I forgot, on Friday I called an anti-NAFTA group to find out about doing some volunteer work; the guy there put me in touch w/this really cool woman who works for a group "Women for Economic Justice," and, it turns out, is also involved in the Women's Action Coalition, which sounded, from the way she described it, like a really cool group to join.

The pattern persists. Last year, after losing a job I wanted to keep and being unemployed for five months, I overextended myself by joining six volunteer activities (hoping to network and "get out of the house"). While my new job was not a direct result of these

activities, I feel my self-confidence from being involved with others helped me in my interviews.

My way of dealing with heartaches has not been a bad one for me, but it could stand improvement, I'm sure. If my way of dealing with a broken heart (whether it be personal or professional) is wrong, well, at least I've identified and defined the problem. As a former professor of mine said, that's the first step to finding the solution. 

Healing from page 1

"Wait it out and know that there's a light at the end of the tunnel. I think the light is the knowledge that you don't need someone else and that you can be happy alone."

Brooke Shields

Rejection is a toughie for me. It hurts me so much that I try to avoid having deep feelings for anyone in the first place. However, there have been men and women with whom the feeling of connection was so great that I couldn't stop myself from falling in love. When the realization dawned upon me that the situation was not able to be continued, I have always found solace in distraction. While living in Sydney, I would drive into the Blue Mountains, which is a beautiful wilderness of cliffs, canyons, and rain forest. While trusting my life to a 9mm rope, with a thousand feet of air between me and the tree canopy below, there was no room left over to think about lost love.

In getting over a love affair in my early twenties, I backpacked around Africa. At one time, I was lost in a high-altitude swamp on an Ugandan mountain range. For ten days, my waking hours were filled with nothing but thinking about where to put my foot so as not to sink up to my thigh in icy mud. My dreams were entirely composed of fantasies about having a hot shower, sleeping in clean sheets, and eating chocolate. Not a single painful thought from my past entered my head. It was the MOST focusing experience I ever had.

Would I recommend it? Only to people who already have desire to tempt death. Retail therapy probably achieves the same effect, and is certainly safer, but the stories you end up with are not ones you will enjoy telling in your old age. So go ahead....next time your heart feels tender, go kayak around Cape Horn.

Carol

And my favorite:

"The best way to mend a broken heart is time....And girlfriends."

Gwyneth Paltrow

Hmm, what if one of them just broke your heart?

Queer Youth Conferences

The Massachusetts Safe Colleges Program, funded by the Governor's Commission on Gay and Lesbian Youth is sponsoring spring conferences at local college campuses. April 10th the theme will be "GLBT for College and Beyond" and will be held at UMass/Lowell in the O'Leary Library, Room 222. April 24th it will be held at Middlesex Community College in Bedford and will focus on "Being GLBT at a Community College." Each conference costs \$10. For more information, contact Arthur Lipkin at 617-491-5301.

Call for Submissions:
Choices and Voices:
Writings about
Abortion

Forty-six percent of North American women have at least one abortion in their lifetime, yet it is an experience not often shared or talked about. Two counselors at Midwest Health Center for Women, a non-profit abortion provider in its 23rd year of providing health services for women, are compiling a book that will examine the influences social factors play in shaping abortion discourse. Submissions can be of any length. The deadline for submissions is June 1, 1999. For more information, contact Ashley Sovern, Director of Counseling and Education or Krista Jacob, Reproductive Health Counselor; c/o Midwest Health Center for Women; 33 South Fifth St., Fourth Fl.; Minneapolis, MN 55402; ProChoice1@aol.com; 612-579-8197; Fax: 612-375-9567.

OutWrite 1999

By Debbie Block-Schwenk

OutWrite, a conference for GLBT writers, is always a source of inspiration for me. Just being in the presence of over a thousand writers and activists, listening to their words and stories, gives me energy and new ideas to pursue my writing and activism. This year's conference was no exception.

The Friday night plenary speakers set the stage for a weekend that was filled with both art and politics. Filmmaker Pratibha Parmar spoke movingly of her experiences of sexism and racism as a woman of color in England and how her activism led her into filmmaking as a medium for bringing to light the experiences of

women, people of color and those of different sexual orientations. Poet Mark Doty followed with his thoughts on the importance of poetry; how it, like other art forms, cannot directly impact policy or government, yet can provide a unique catalyst for changing individual hearts and

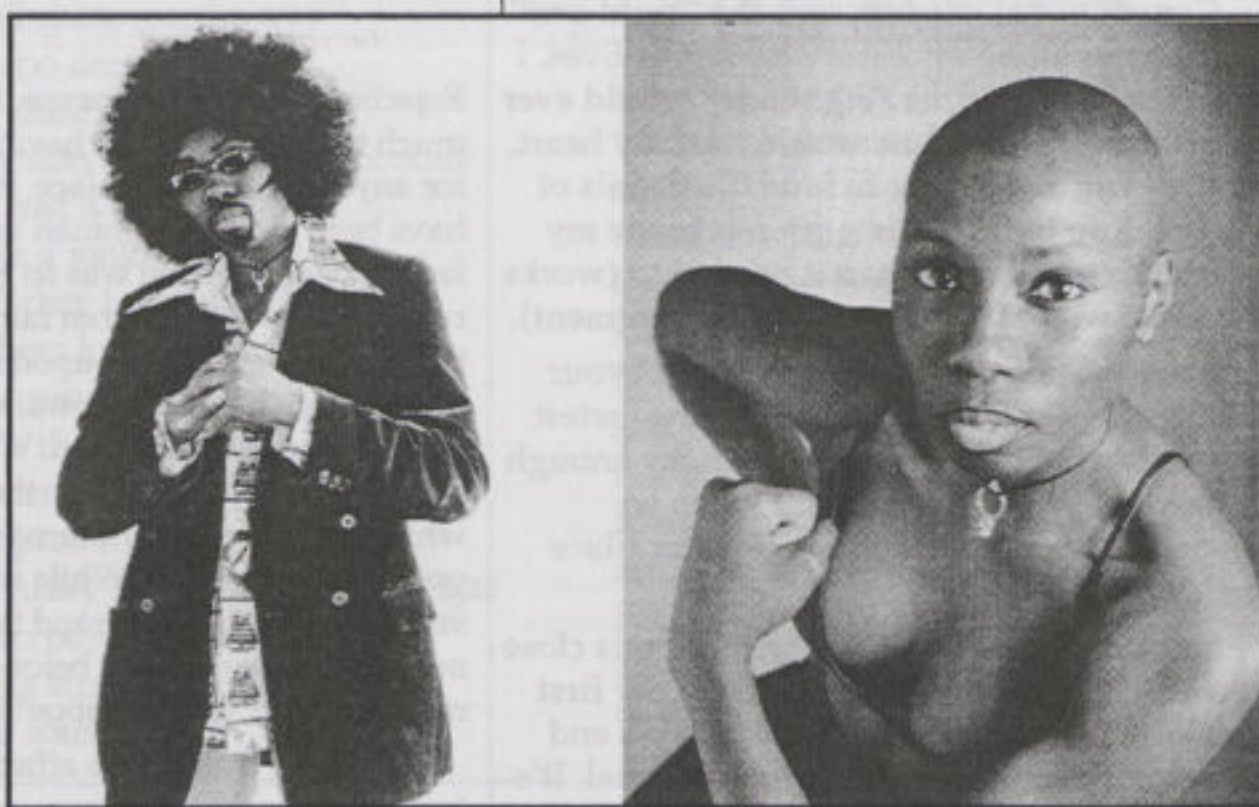
minds. Art inspires empathy and imagination, without which there would be no vision of a better future and no vessel for hope that our actions will indeed change the society in which we live.

The next morning I was thrilled to be in the audience at a panel entitled "Finding the Bi Voice" with panelists Carol Queen, Bill Brent, and Carol Guess. Guess commented on the title of the panel, saying that she had originally proposed a panel entitled "Writing Bi Characters." She felt there is more than one bi voice and finding it is not necessarily the right goal because bisexuality by its nature shadows, haunts, and troubles other identities. Guess suggested that people's fears of bisexuality are somehow wrapped up in their fears of the future, as if a bi woman's ability to have, for example, a meaningful relationship with a man and then later with a woman crystallizes everyone's fear of change.

Bill Brent spoke about creating a character

for an anthology and coming up with a bi punk detective. Characters that surprise us and can't be pinned down are often the most interesting, and a bi identity can be a valuable aspect of this. He felt also that bisexuality gives a writer an expanded awareness of what's possible.

Carol Queen, who like Brent writes fiction that is primarily erotica, feels that an erotic literary sphere is a natural place for bisexuality. As erotic literature presents a utopian vision of sex, so bisexuality presents a utopian vision of a sex-positive and non-gender-rolled lifestyle. She finds it hard to situate both bisexuality and all sex writing into the "real world" in her fiction, although she doesn't have the same difficulty in her non-fiction. She acknowledged that bi communi-



Drag King Dred, aka Mildred, was one of the highlights of the Outwrite "Out is IN" dance.

Photo by Stan Williams

ties are hard to pin down and that people living a bisexual lifestyle may not see any group or established identity with which to identify. The challenge of bisexuality, however, increases the understanding of fluidity for everyone.

A member of the audience asked a question I'm sure many bi writers struggle with: how do you express a character's bisexuality without giving him/her multiple sexual partners? Guess suggested using fluid, non-traditional literary forms to signify the character's sexual fluidity. Queen listed the "traditional" bi signifiers — t-shirts, non-monogamy, flashbacks — then suggested that the subtler the signifier the better. Brent added that placing a group of characters together doing ordinary things (in his novel in progress they are putting on a play) gives a chance to explore the varied experiences of character's sexualities. If characters who aren't bi also have multiple partners, an au-

dience member suggested, then the bi character won't appear so stereotyped if she/he does have more than one relationship in the course of the book. Another audience member noted that bi characters are often shown in isolation, not in community. And, a woman who spends a great deal of time in cyberspace spoke of its potential for creating "genderless" spaces.

A discussion ensued about the essentialist argument that people have no choice over their sexual orientation. Carol Queen maintained that a strategic decision was made to present sexual orientation (toward one gender) as something people cannot help, as opposed to the more fluid and radical statement that "we can't help who we fall in love with." Carol Guess added that some prominent gay and lesbian legal theorists had argued against the essentialist view of orientation because it wouldn't help their case and could even be detrimental from a legal standpoint.

An audience member who is a journalist asked whether it is appropriate for us to take up "queer space" when involved with someone of the opposite sex. Queen responded that was an important question. Does the proximity of bi women to men affect their view of women's culture? As long as you are open to and participate in that culture, you have a right to be a part of it, she continued, but don't just waltz in and expect to take over if you don't have a history there. And there are times when our presence is disruptive and we need to take the dialogue elsewhere, she acknowledged. This is part of the greater question of "how do we deal with difference?" a question we have not gotten very far with in this country.

A final discussion about what makes biphobia different didn't yield any concrete answers. While many groups deal with self-censorship, bisexuals can be pressured to censor themselves from both ends of the spectrum. By challenging the either/or dichotomy of gender and sexual preference, we open up space to look outside of all boxes, a troubling proposition for many. But an outlook that may become increasingly necessary in this increasingly complicated world.

Encouraged by the challenging discussion of the bi panel, I next attended a panel called "Whom have we left out?" Several panelists and audience members had suggestions — from a punk lesbian who felt little connection to the lesbian community to the editor of an HIV/AIDS magazine which will soon be printing a number of articles from prison inmates. Others talked more theoretically, noting that sometimes straight people writing about gay issues address aspects gay people

are reluctant to express. One panelist felt that queer literature is too soft, that we don't write our enemies into our stories. Are we ghettoizing ourselves with our topics? Are we writing about the challenging and sticky issues but not reading or publishing those stories? Finally, one panelist noted that while identity politics seeks to give us answers, the goal of fiction is to give us questions: Who are we? Who can we possibly be?

Barbara Smith, a long-time feminist, African-American, and lesbian activist presented the Audre Lorde Memorial Lecture. In a short, poignant address, she urged the queer community to address the racism both within its ranks and in the larger society. She took a strong stand against the Human Rights Campaign's conservative gay agenda and the fiasco that has left the idea for a Millennial Queer March in chaos. She also spoke movingly against the death penalty, citing Lorde's opposition to it as well as to all forms of oppression.

The Bromfield Street Educational Foundation which puts on OutWrite prides itself on its progressive politics, so I found it both ironic and frustrating that both the panel that dealt with race and the one about class were held during the same session (to my mind these are both vital, and in many cases intertwined, issues). I chose to attend the class panel where two of the three panelists were African-American so race issues were definitely touched on as well.

Mattie Richardson, an African-American

Let's Play BAWL



The Boston Alternative Women's Softball League (aka "BAWL") is looking for new teams and players in both its competitive and recreational divisions. BAWL is primarily a lesbian league, but is open to all women. Interested? Have questions? Contact Liz at 508-628-5477, or Beth at bgrierson@glad.org.

Is this the end?

By Renata

All I want is to be loved and held in your embrace
Instead I am given your empty promises in its place.

Your eyes gape at me with such sexual desire
Your hands stir my blood hot with fire.
Yet in your eyes I see no passion from the depths of your soul
And as your hands lay upon me they leave me nostalgic and cold.

You say you love me for the comfort I bestow
For my touches, for my friendship and the caring that I show.
Why, my body aches and yearns for you to do the same
As with others you have done. Why with me are you so lame?

Is it Love that has left you so enfeebled and so scared?
Incapable of commitment, a future with me to share?
This impotency has disheartened me, this you do know
And while I love you with my heart I am afraid that I must go.

All I wanted was to be loved and held in your embrace
Instead you gave me your empty promises in its place.

You Will Submit!



Philogyny (Love of Women), a sex zine for women who fuck, suck, lick, stick, and love other women, is demanding your submission. The zine is looking for erotic short stories, b&w photos and artwork, cartoons, sex tips, sex and relationship questions, sex theory, essays on the politics of lesbian and bi sexualities, butch/femme, androchicks, S/M, B/D, etc., etc. Text must be typed and double-spaced. Email work with your name, phone number, and email address to philogyny@hotm.com or call Jean Powers at 617-495-6656.

writer and graduate student, spoke about the values of queer culture as including a reverence for wealth and privilege. She used as an example the film *High Art* in which upper and middle class white women are obsessed with making art not out of the world around them, but in their own image (by photographing their friends and lovers). Queer art also falls into the same trap as other aspects of popular culture by using race as a signifier for class, blurring distinctions between the two and turning race into a stereotype that is misread along class lines. She added that working class people are often leading lives full of struggle for survival and therefore sexuality is less a focus of their life. Hard physical work takes a toll on the body, resources like time and space to write in are also scarce. Finally, she noted the construction of class as something other than pure economics: as a graduate student she makes very little money, but is hardly considered to be poor in the same way her family was.

Lawrence Braithwaite next spoke vehemently about the view of class within gay literature and the gay male community. As in the hugely popular *Tales of the City* series with its elite A-list gay men who apparently spend most of their time throwing parties and having affairs, he felt that queer art and culture enthusiastically embraces middle and upper class values. Lower class men are often fetishized, used as sexual objects to be collected and "saved" from the hardship of their background, for which they are to be eternally grateful. These portrayals of working class men don't take into account the physical toll of working class labor, nor the fact that these men have families or communities they may not want to run away from. Finally, much gay literature glamorizes hustler culture, providing another scenario for the poor young man to be either used and abandoned or occasionally "rescued."

In giving a contrasting example in which a gay working class man does have a voice, Braithwaite brought up *Maurice*, E. M. Forster's one openly gay novel. In it, the protagonist, Maurice, becomes involved with a working-class man, who he thinks is only out to blackmail and manipulate him. The other man finally gets his point across that he has pursued the relationship out of genuine affection, not out of ulterior motive. But class is constructed differently in England, where it is more a matter of culture and identity and less a matter of economics.

Braithwaite felt the negative consequences of this obsession with wealth and power within the gay community crystallized in the story of Andrew Cunanan, the gay spree killer whose violence may have been triggered by

his growing realization that he would not attain the wealth and power he desired as he grew older and became of less interest to the wealthy older men who shored up his lavish lifestyle. Braithwaite also related having friends come out who felt the necessity to turn into "clones" in order to fit into the gay community. He concluded that the narrow interests of the queer community limits it; our goal should be not just to end anti-gay violence, but all violence.

The third speaker, Mary Capello, had written a memoir about her family using excerpts from the journal of her grandfather, an Italian immigrant who'd been a cobbler, and her mother's poems. She spoke about the unique position of being queer and how it puts you both inside and outside of your family; it can be a place that allows you to be both an "observer" as well as a participant in your family life and history.

With the panels concluded for the day, I next went to bi writers caucus. There we talked about bi publishing— while some publishers seem open to it, others feel that they've "already done their bi book" - and about the term bisexual itself. While many feel it's not the best term, especially in the binary aspect of assuming there's two genders, it's a recognizable term and so useful while we wait for the right word to come along (ones we considered included "flexi-sexual," "polysexual," and "polymorphously perverse"). The alliance between bi and trans communities was mentioned, with a reminder of how much violence transgendered people face as a fact we should all work to reverse. Finally, we asked why we don't see more bi books/characters, with the exception of science fiction and horror. Is it too soon? Does the current system of "niche marketing" leave bisexuals without a space?

The closing session at OutWrite spotlights an individual performer, and this year's was exceptional. Paul Bonin-Rodriguez presented a work in progress about himself and his family, detailing how he cared for his ailing Mexican grandmother, her death, his relationships with his religious brothers (one struggling with his own homosexual desires), and the decision to sell his grandmother's house and finally mourn for the gay uncle who had mysteriously vanished sixteen years before.

There was so much going on at OutWrite one person couldn't experience it all. If you attended, feel free to write and share your own experiences with *BiWomen*. The Bromfield Street Educational Foundation is always looking for volunteers to help create OutWrite. If you'd like to help put this intense and enlightening weekend together for 2000, you can call them at 617-262-6969 or email them at outwrite@bsef.terranet.com.



Book review:

Married Women Who Love Women

by Carren Strock

Reviewed by Linda Blair



Reading Carren Strock's book *Married Women Who Love Women* brought back many memories of my own exciting, tumultuous, and bitter-but-mostly-sweet coming out period.

Early in the book, Carren Strock reveals her own story of awakening through her close friendship, intimate connection, and eventual deep attraction to her best friend Toby. As she describes it: "One evening, while we were sitting and talking, I found myself looking, really looking, at Toby. She smiled at me from across the room and a strange and powerful feeling rushed through my body. My heart began to race. I realized I was in love with my best friend."

From that point, Carren felt like their customary hello and good-bye hugs "took on new meaning." For her they did, but, as it turned out, not for Toby. The minute Carren revealed her "love" for her friend, everything changed between them. The ease, comfort, and closeness they had always had with each other was replaced by an awkward, more forced atmosphere as Toby became more guarded and Carren more self-conscious until eventually their friendship faded altogether.

Her story and so many others that Strock includes, some similar, some quite different, make this book worth reading. *Married Women Who Love Women* is the result of at least several dozen interviews Strock conducted with women who were or are married to men and who also love women (or MWLW's as Strock refers to them). The issues æ logistical, psychological, and sexual æ that each woman did and do face as a result of their life situations are fascinating. Woman after woman tells her own story in her own words. The breadth of experiences, as well as the ingenuity and creativity that many of these women, and quite a few of their husbands and/or female lovers, approach their situation with was for me, as a polyamorous-identified bisexual, both surprising and inspiring.

Rosalie, as well as her husband Jack and life partner Brenda, are happy living as a family. Rosalie lives in "a rural setting in a midwestern state" and has been married to Jack for twenty-five years. She says she has always had a great deal of "personal freedom" in her marriage and so when she met Brenda while on a business trip, it followed that

Brenda soon met Jack and began to visit Rosalie every weekend. She writes "I actually believe that Jack was the one who began to talk about a life that included all three of us. He did not want to lose me, or have the life we had together ruined, and knew that Brenda had become important to me...He also saw that I loved and needed her." Although Rosalie is sexually active with both Brenda and Jack, she considers herself a lesbian rather than bi because her primary attraction is to women. Although we hear a few words from Jack's own voice, we unfortunately do not hear any directly from Brenda, but Rosalie tells us that "she does regret that she will never have me to herself." They have developed a "three-cornered hug" that has become a nightly ritual (and is the extent of the physical affection between Jack and Brenda as well as between the three of them as a trio). Like many polyamorous individuals, Rosalie's major relationship stress is finding enough time to satisfy each of her partners.

Many women in the book continue to love, feel great affection for, and share a very close friendship with their husbands. Of these women, many stay married, although in plenty of cases they or their husbands seek to separate or divorce even though they still have a strong affinity with one another.

Other women feel somewhat or completely alienated from their husbands. For many, this has built steadily over time and many women describe that alienation as a primary factor which hastened their discovery or motivated them to act on their same sex attractions. In many of these situations they or their husbands seek divorce. But many others continue to try and "work things out" or stay married for logistical reasons, especially those with children. Still others stayed together out of societal or familial expectations, or because of personal fears.

Two common themes run through almost every woman's story. Virtually every woman felt unsatisfied with her emotional connection with her husband. Many describe their connections to their husbands as friendships. Few talk of passion as an ongoing part of their marital connection. Lois's story is fairly typical, as she explains "Initially, when we first got married, there was definitely sexual attraction between my husband and me. We had a great sex life." Then she describes a growing sense of feeling "cut off" from her husband. As her feelings of isolation grew, she developed a friendship with another woman that soon became emotional and then physical. She explains further "If it was strictly sex I needed I know I could have gotten that from my husband. No. That wasn't the reason I turned to her. Emotionally I had a need that was not being filled."

Opening Our Hearts



The Welcoming Congregation Committee of the North Shore Unitarian Universalist Church in Danvers and PFLAG are sponsoring a North Shore community art show this spring called "Opening Our Hearts" which will focus on the diversity of sexual orientation. The exhibit will run from May 2-June 13 in the meeting room of the North Shore Unitarian Universalist Church, 332 Locust Street in Danvers. The opening reception for the show is Sunday, May 2nd, 3-6 p.m. The public is invited and refreshments will be served. PFLAG is sponsoring an evening with a panel of artists speaking about their work on Friday, May 14th. For more information, contact the NSUU church office at 978-774-7582.

LGBT Symposium in Rhode Island

The University of Rhode Island Committee to Eliminate Homophobia and Heterosexism is sponsoring the 5th Annual Symposium on LGBT issues on April 8-10. Keynote speaker is Tracey Conaty, communications director for the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. For more information, contact Andrea Herrmann at the URI GLBTA office at 401-874-5480.


Lois's story is one that causes me to take issue with what I see as Strock's overuse of the terms and concepts of "true sexuality" and "true sexual orientation" in describing women's same-sex attractions. Clearly, some of the women in the book never felt any or much sexual connection or experienced much or any pleasure through sex with their husbands or other men. In these cases, such terms are probably accurate.

But other women seem to be describing a change in their sexual feelings over time or a simultaneous, though different and generally less intense, sexual connection with husbands than with their female lovers. Miriam, who identifies as bisexual, describes having enjoyed sex with her husband "not because I was attracted to him, but because he was able to turn me on. I had sexual feelings and enjoyed doing sexual things and having orgasms, but I had never had a desire to really stimulate a man," something she definitely *does* want to do with women. She describes sex with a woman as

much more natural for her, and women's bodies as much more attractive to her than men's. To me, what she is saying is that sex with men allows her to enjoy and makes her feel very in touch with her *own* sexuality, but not really with her partner's. With a female lover, on the other hand, she feels the connection to *both* of their sexual feelings and physical sensations. Her sentiments resonated strongly with me and I think most of us would agree with her belief that "you don't have to have the same sexual response to both men and women to be bi. They can be qualitatively different responses." For women like Lois and Miriam, Strock's use of her all-or-nothing terms seem too cut and dry.

On the other hand, the second theme that runs through the book which does seem very clear cut is the sense of "rightness" that the women felt at experiencing sexual intimacy with another woman. Strock tells us that in all her research and countless interviews regarding the many and various stories, feelings and fears leading up to them as women's "first physically intimate relationships with other women were almost identical. They spoke of an immediate sense of well-being and rightness that came over them... a new freedom when they connected with that other woman." Strock describes her own first sexual experience with a woman with the revelation that "we came together and I knew that I was a sexual being."

Strock includes chapters on how children, family members, friends, and acquaintances reacted when MWLW's came out to them and to the changes that took place in their lives. As you might expect, reactions were all over the map, although most seem largely or at least partly supportive. In one segment subtitled "When Friends Are Intuitive," Carol's friend, who senses something unusual is going on, asks her point blank "You're having an affair with a woman, aren't you?" I could more than relate since my mother was every bit as direct when, in only slightly different words, she asked me the very same thing.

One of the most bizarre, but probably common, reactions was the author's explanation of coming out to her friend Lorraine. Carren Strock tells her friend that she is a lesbian, but Lorraine replies that since Carren doesn't look or act like the lesbians she works with, she mustn't really be one. Later, when the news sinks in, Lorraine confesses "Wow, this is very scary... How do I know I won't wake up one day and realize I love women? If you don't look like one but turned out to be one, could that happen to me?" Better watch out, Lorraine. You never know! 

BETH DAMSKY, MSW, LICSW

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Show your VISIBILITY with buttons!

Two roads
diverged in a
yellow wood...
and I took both

HATE IS
NOT
A FAMILY
VALUE

Other designs include:

- If God had meant for people to be bisexual there would be two sexes
- I'm bisexual and I'm NOT attracted to you
- Racism, sexism, homophobia — Recognize the Connections
- Bisexual Pride
- VISIBILITY

Please send \$2.00 per button (includes postage) to:
BBWN, P.O. Box 400639, Cambridge, MA 02140

CALENDAR *continued from page 12*

May 4 ♦ Tuesday

Bi Rap at the Women's Center, 7:30-9:00 p.m. Call 617-354-8807 for topic.

May 5 ♦ Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m. See April 7th.

May 7 ♦ Friday

BiWomen Submissions Deadline. This issue's theme is "Children." Send articles (on any topic), calendar entries, letters, art, news, and views to: *BiWomen*, P.O. Box 400639, Cambridge, MA 02140 or e-mail to eruthstr@mail.lesley.edu.

May 8 ♦ Saturday

Biversity Hike in the Middlesex Fells, 1 p.m. (Weather Permitting: Check the BRC phone updates if questionable.) The Fells are located seven miles from metropolitan Boston; they're crisscrossed with 30 miles of footpaths, bridle paths, and old carriage roads that wind over and around a rock-strewn, hilly landscape. Meet at the parking lot at 1:00. From Boston take I-95 north to exit 7. Pick up Route 28 and Fellsway west. Go left over the expressway and then right on South Border Road in Winchester. The parking area is near the pond.

May 12 ♦ Wednesday

Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting, 7-9 p.m. (See April 14th)

May 15 ♦ Saturday

Youth Pride Day

1999, Noon.

Rally at the State House and then march to the Hatch Shell on the Esplanade. If

you have never done this before, do it this year. These queer youth are *incredible* and they deserve our visible support. Call 617-727-3600, ext. 312 for more information.



May 15 ♦ Saturday

Biversity Brunch, 11:30 a.m. Brunch will be at Thornton's, 100 Peterborough St. in Boston's Fenway area. Nearest T stop is Fenway on the D branch of the Green Line.

Biversity Planning Meeting, 1 p.m. Help plan events for the June/July calendar. At the restaurant immediately following the brunch.

Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, 2 p.m. After brunch we'll be visiting one of the country's most unique, beautiful, and quirky museums. Located at 2 Palace Rd, near the Museum of Fine Arts. Get off the Museum stop on the E branch of the Green Line or walk with us from Thornton's.

May 17 ♦ Monday

Serve Dinner at the Living Center, 5-7:30 p.m. The bi community is volunteering to help serve dinner for members of the Boston Living Center, the HIV/AIDS service organization where the Bi Office is located.

The work is easy, the staff is friendly, the cause is good, and your dinner is free. Contact Wesley at 617-441-3573 or by email at wlt@shore.net to volunteer.

May 18 ♦ Tuesday

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m. See April 7th.

Bi Rap at the Women's Center, 7:30-9:00 p.m. Call 617-354-8807 for topic.

May 19 ♦ Wednesday

BBWN Introductory Meeting. A safe space for women to connect with the bisexual community. 7:30 - 9 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. Info: 617-354-8807.

May 23 ♦ Sunday

BBWN Potluck Brunch, Noon. This month we will meet at Robyn's house near Central Square. Accessible by T. (Right near Carberry's for quick take-out, hint, hint.) We can start making plans for Pride. Call for directions at 576-1066 or e-mail ochs@bi.org.

Bisexual People of Color Potluck Dinner, 5-7 p.m. Boston Living Center, 29 Stanhope St. (See April 25th)

May 25 ♦ Tuesday

BBWN Pre-mailing Dinner, 6 p.m. at Bertucci's on Stanhope St., just two doors down from the Bi Office.

BiWomen mailing, 7-9 p.m. at the Bi Office. Label, stuff, and lick. Actually the licking is *after* the mailing. Ha! Join us.

May 29 ♦ Saturday

Naturist Swimming Trip at The Ledges, 9 a.m. We'll be car-pooling to The Ledges clothing-optional swimming site in southern Vermont. Meet at the bi office at 29 Stanhope St. in Boston. Bring a towel, stuff to eat, and sun-screen.

May 30 ♦ Sunday

Biversity Brunch, 1 p.m. Ethiopian food will be shared at Addis Red Sea, 544 Tremont St. in Boston's South End. Near the Boston Center for the Arts. Nearest T stop is Back Bay on the Orange Line.

Biversity Boston is the mixed gender bisexual Network of Greater Boston.

Ongoing Events

4th Sundays:

Bi People of Color, 5-7 p.m. at the Boston Living Center, 29 Stanhope St. For info call 617-424-9595.

1st & 3rd

Thursdays:

Bi Women's Resource & Support Group, 7 p.m. at the Women's Health Consortium, 379 State St., Portsmouth, NH. For info call 603-431-1669 or contact Sue Corcoran at schmoo@nh.ultranet.com.

Women's Club Nights

Saturdays: Club III, 608 Somerville Ave. in Somerville.

Sundays: Lava Bar in Kenmore Square, 575 Commonwealth Ave. at the Howard Johnson's.



SUBSCRIPTION RATE

(sliding scale)

___\$0-\$20 (pay what you can)

___\$20-\$30 (suggested)

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NAME _____

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BBWN, P.O. BOX 400639, Cambridge, MA 02140

The "Bi Office"

is the Bisexual Resource Center, located at 29-33 Stanhope Street, behind Club Cafe, right next door to Bertucci's and just down the street from the Hard Rock Cafe. For info call 617-424-9595.

Ongoing Events

1st & 3rd Tuesdays:

Bi Women's Rap. 7:30 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St, Cambridge. For info and discussion topics call 617-354-8807.

Wednesdays:

Gendertalk. 8:30-9:30 p.m. on WMBR 88.1 FM. Deals with transgender and queer issues.

2nd Thursdays:

Single Jewish Lesbian and Bisexual Women's Group. 6:30-8 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant Street. Info: 617-499-9612

Bi Married Women's Support Group. 7-9 p.m. at the Bi Office. For bi women who are married to or in a relationship with a man. Call Debbie at 617-731-9060 for info.

3rd Thursdays:

SpeakOut Meeting. 8 p.m., at the Boston Living Center, 29-33 Stanhope St, Boston. Wheelchair accessible. General meeting at 6:45 p.m., theme program starts at 8 p.m. Info: 617-354-0133.

CALENDAR

April 1 ♦ Thursday

BRC Volunteer Night, 7-9pm. Each Thursday, volunteers perform easy tasks like filling orders for buttons and the Bisexual Resource Guide, logging phone messages, returning phone calls, answering mail, making copies, etc. at the BRC Office at 29 Stanhope St. in Boston. Call (617)424-9595 for info.

April 4 ♦ Sunday

Bi Space. 7-9 p.m. A friendly discussion space to meet other bisexuals and talk about bisexual issues. Our topic for the first hour will be "New Bisexual in the City." A \$2 donation is requested to help pay for the space. BiSpace is held at the BRC at 29 Stanhope St. in Boston. Dial 1 to be buzzed in.

April 6 ♦ Tuesday

Bi Rap at the Women's Center, 7:30-9:00. Topic: "How to make love to a woman." (An explicit discussion; please bring visual aids if you wish. Seriously.) Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., 617-354-8807.



April 7 ♦ Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m. An informal support group for people who think they may be bisexual or attracted to more than one sex. A small donation is requested to help pay for the space. The group meets at the Bisexual Resource Center at 29 Stanhope St. in Boston. Call 617-424-9595 for info.

April 10 ♦ Saturday

Biversity Hike in the Blue Hills, 11 a.m. Meet at the BRC office at 29 Stanhope St. in Back Bay to carpool. Or join us at 11:45 at the Trailside Museum at Blue Hills.

April 14 ♦ Wednesday

Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting, 7-9 p.m. The BRC board meets monthly to work on educational programs, the bi office, the web site, the international bi organizing, fund raising, etc. All bi community members welcome to attend. The meeting is at 29 Stanhope St. in Back Bay.



Thanks for reading
BiWomen.

Do you subscribe?

How about a little
commitment?

April 17 ♦ Saturday

Biversity Brunch, 11:30 a.m. The brunch will be held at the ever-popular Johnny D's on Holland St. in Davis Square in Somerville. The Davis stop on the Red Line is just across the street.

BBWN Potluck Brunch, 1 p.m. This month we will

be heading to Belmont to Lucy's home for conversation, food, and good company. Her home is accessible by bus. Call for directions, 617-484-5964.

April 20 ♦ Tuesday

Coming Out as Bisexual. 7-9 p.m. (See April 7th)

Bi Rap at the Women's Center, 7:30-9:00. Topic: "Defining boundaries in our relationships." (See April 6th)

April 21 ♦ Wednesday

Spare Change Party, 7 p.m. From time to time, when the money gets low, Biversity holds a spare change party. Bring along that jar of change that's gathering dust on the dresser and join it with others to help fund the Biversity Calendar. We'll meet in Woody's living room of 1000 dim lights to combine our resources. Treats will be served. Call 617-266-1410 or e-mail wglenn01@sprynet.com for directions.

April 24 ♦ Saturday

Bayard Rustin Breakfast, 10:30 a.m. - 2 p.m. An annual commemorative event for LGBT people of color and their friends. It is being held at the John F. Kennedy Library & Museum in Boston. The event is free, but you need a ticket. Call 617-332-5404 for more information.

April 24 ♦ Saturday

Fever! Spring Dance for Women, 8 p.m.- midnight. Knights of Columbus Hall, 323 Washington St., Brighton Center. \$10 cover. Info: Dee 781-648-0722.

April 25 ♦ Sunday

Biversity Brunch, 1 p.m. Meet for vegetarian food at the newly renovated Buddha's Delight in Boston's Chinatown. On Beach Street between Harrison and Washington. T stop is Chinatown on the Orange Line.

Bi Billiards, 3 p.m. Shoot a little pool, eat a few snacks at the Ramrod, 1254 Boylston St. in Boston. \$3 cover. Nearest T stops are Auditorium or Fenway on the D branch of the Green Line.



Bisexual People of Color Potluck Dinner, 5-7 p.m. Join other bisexual people of color for a potluck dinner and discussion group. A small donation is requested to help pay for the space. The group meets in the library at the Boston Living Center at 29 Stanhope St. in Boston. Dial 1 to be buzzed in. For more information, call 617-424-9595 and leave a message for Ananda or Maria Christina.

May 2 ♦ Sunday

Bi Space, 7-9 p.m. First hour's topic: "Group Households." See April 4th.

CALENDAR continues on page 11

Children

Bi Moms' Roundtable

Editor's Note: A while ago, a few women on the BBWN chatlist identified themselves as mothers and there was a burst of discussion about that aspect of their lives. Seeing that our upcoming issue was going to center on the theme of "Children," I asked if anyone would like to participate in a discussion about being a bi mom. Three women offered to meet at my house and we had an interesting roundtable discussion about their lives and experiences with raising children. It's amazing how different each woman's experience has been. Thanks go out to all three women and their families for giving their time on a recent Sunday. This is an edited version of that discussion.

My name is Bonnie. I have one daughter; she's nine years old. We live about an hour out of Boston; we're kind of in the country / suburbs. Her father and I divorced about seven years ago when she was a baby. For me, in terms of being bi, I had known in my twenties that I had attractions to women, but not only women. It's like I didn't know quite how to sort that out, I kept thinking it had to be either/or. I thought well I don't ONLY have attractions to women and I didn't know a lot of lesbians at the time to have conversations with them, so I just decided OK that's just not it, it's just one of those things and I backburnered it. I thought maybe it was common to all women, and I knew I wanted to have kids and ended up getting married. I was married for six years and for reasons quite other than my sexuality it did not work out.

And it was about two years ago that I became very attracted to a woman who I met through work and realized that this is not something that is going away in my life and I'm perfectly free to explore it so I'm going to explore it and understand what's up for me. So that began my journey into making phone calls, starting to read books, like *Bi Any Other Name*, which is a great start. If I'm going to have a label that's most true then I'm bisexual. I don't see myself as a bisexual person, I see myself as a human being — essentially spirit like all of us — that this is just one facet of who I am or how I am in the world. And the way I understand it, or the way it is for me is that I can love a person whatever body they happen to be wearing — sometimes it's male sometimes it's female — and that's all OK.

Roundtable continues on page 4



Aunt Robyn with nephews Conor and Nicky.

Photo by David Tanzman

Nephews Galore: An Aunt's Perspective

By Robyn Ochs

The goddess must have been playing a joke on this feminist, when she blessed me with nine (count them) nine nephews and not a single niece. Every time another one was on the way, I would hope for a girl. At one point three of my siblings were expecting at the same time, so I was SURE at least one would be a girl — after all, there was a seven in eight statistical probability. Nope. But my disappointment was theoretical and short-lived: once each baby was born and we'd been properly introduced, I realized that he was himself, and completely wonderful exactly as is.

I have never wanted to have children of my own, or rather I've always been of two minds: part of me wanted to become a parent, while another part of me knew that the cost to many of the other things I love doing (activism, for one, and sleep for another) would be greater than I was willing to pay. I'm forty years old now, and feel that I've made the right decision. I teach college and am surrounded by young people as I travel to college campuses around the country doing my workshops and speaking engagements. If I had children of my own, I would never have the freedom to do this. And I know that what I am doing is important.

Nephews continues on page 7

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Volunteers of the Month

Debbie Block-Schwenk

Carol

Ellen Cullen

Amy Wyeth

Claire

Robyn Ochs

Elle Thomas

Rosalie



And many more wonderful women! You know who you are! Thank you, thank you, thank you!

Thanks again!

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Ellyn Ruthstrom

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As you can see, this issue is sixteen pages, as opposed to the usual twelve. There was so much to put in this time that expansion seemed the only way to go. Hope you agree.

A large part of the issue revolves around the "Children" theme. The three women who participated in the Bi Moms' Roundtable have a lot to say about the various aspects of their lives as mothers. It is great to read their very different perspectives on being a bi parent. Two pieces come from the viewpoint of being an aunt (see pages 1 and 9) and Natalie Rivkin touches on a recent experience with a rainbow sticker and a child whose family she works for.

June is full of Pride and I've listed some Boston activities as well as others around the New England area. It's by no means a comprehensive list so you should check other sources for more details. Over the last few years, bisexuals have become a named and visible part of many pride days. I hope you join in the festivities in your area — bis have a lot to be proud of!

And with that in mind, see page 3 for information on Celebrate Bisexuality Day this coming September. And start thinking about ways that BBWN and other bi organizations can commemorate this occasion fittingly.

There are also a couple of poems, some bi news, and on page 10 you'll find an interesting e-mail interchange that makes us aware once again of how much we still have to do within the greater queer community. Mr. Light obviously doesn't see us as part of his community enough to understand that the biphobia he readily demonstrates is a part of the reason we need to have access to finding safe living situations in our world. Perhaps others of us can take the time out to contact Mr. Light and inform him of our dissatisfaction with his disinterest in our safety. <http://www.roommateconnection.com>; e-mail: trc@roommateconnection.com; 617-527-4190.

Ellyn Ruthstrom

The Boston Bisexual Women's Network is a feminist, not-for-profit collective organization whose purpose is to bring women together for support and validation. It is meant to be a safe environment in which women of all sexual self-identities, class backgrounds, racial, ethnic and religious groups, ages, abilities and disabilities are welcome. Through the vehicles of discussion, support, education, outreach, political action and social groups related to bisexuality, we are committed to the goals of full acceptance as bisexuals within the gay and lesbian community, and to full acceptance of bisexuality and the liberation of all gay people within the larger society.

Next in BiWomen:

The theme for August/September is:

Seduction

How do you do it?
What is seductive to you? How would you like someone to seduce you? Do you seduce women differently than you do men?



DEADLINE: July 9, 1999

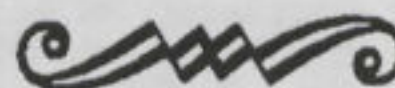
Future Issues in 1999/2000

October/November:

Being Out in the Workplace

December/January:

Rituals & Celebrations



Please Submit to BiWomen!

Send articles, calendar entries, letters, black-and-white art, news, and views to:

BiWomen

P.O. Box 400639

Cambridge, MA 02140

or via e-mail to eruthstr@mail.lesley.edu.

If you do not want your name published, please tell us.

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Celebrate Bisexuality Day!

The first ever international Celebrate Bisexuality Day (CBD) will take place September 23, 1999. CBD is a day of rejoicing, merriment, fun, frolicking, and general tomfoolery to commemorate our bisexual communities. More importantly, it's a day for all bisexuals (and bi allies) to celebrate our lives.

Whether activist, student, spouse, child, parent, non-out, 9 to 5, or party animal, we live in a monosexual dominated world. Despite this, we discover our identity. Each day we face this bias, yet manage to hold onto our sexuality. CBD is a day to celebrate our survival. A day to enjoy how incredibly fabulous we are. Events ranging from film festivals to marches, dances, parties, potlucks, and slumber parties, are being planned by bisexual groups around the globe.

Join in the discussion! An event's bulletin board is open on the web at: <http://home.earthlink.net/~madamec/index.html>. An email-based discussion is also available and open to anyone interested. To subscribe to this list, go to <http://www.onelist.com/subscribe/biday>.

BRC Co-Sponsors Conference on Bisexuality and HIV Prevention

The Bisexual Resource Center and the Fenway Community Health Center are co-sponsoring a one-day conference on Monday, June 21 to create effective HIV prevention strategies for bisexual and behaviorally-bisexual people in Massachusetts. Entitled, "Playing Safe with Both Teams: Bisexuality and HIV Prevention," the conference is designed for HIV prevention educators, HIV test counselors, Department of Public Health staff, health care providers, therapists, counselors, STD clinic staff, people with HIV, and other interested community members.

The conference is free (and includes lunch), but pre-registration is required. E-mail: mmiller@fchc.org or call 617-927-6032 for more information or to receive a registration form.

Don't forget the Boston AIDS Walk, Sunday, June 6th. Some people think that the AIDS crisis is over. AIDS Action knows it's not and continues to supply a variety of services to those in Massachusetts whose lives continue to be challenged by this disease.

Annual Bi Brunch for Boston Pride



Each year the bi community gathers together at the Community Church of Boston in Copley Square (9 - 11:30 a.m.) to get psyched for the Pride March. This year the brunch will benefit BBWN. (Sliding scale, \$5-10) This is a wonderful occasion to see old friends and make new ones -- and also eat good food and stock up on your bi buttons. BBWN has a new selection of buttons to sell so please stop by the table and get yours to show your pride that day, and every day. After the brunch, join BBWN, BRC, Biversity, and other bi groups as they march queerly through the streets of Boston to the Commons. Call 617-424-9595 for late-breaking info.



Gay/Straight Youth Pride 99!

Saturday, May 15th
hundreds of queer youth and their allies rallied at the Massachusetts State House in Boston.

After student speakers told of their own experiences of harassment and of empowerment in their schools, the various contingents from all over the New England area marched around Boston Commons and ended at the Hatch Shell on the esplanade for an afternoon of music and PRIDE!

Photos by Gabriel Caro.



Upcoming Bi Conferences

July 16-18, 1999, 17th National Bisexual Conference, Edinburgh, Scotland. Write: BM Bicon, London, WCIN 3XX; e-mail: bicon99@bi.org, web site: <http://bi.org/~biconlbicon99/>

July 23-25, 1999, San Francisco Bi Film Festival, 530 Divisadero St. #183, San Francisco, CA 94117, 415-665-5645, jtpasty@sirius.com

August 21, 1999, BAFFLED Conference BAFFLED, an anti-conference, standing for: The Bisexual Arts & Film Festival, Literature, Entertainment, and Drama. At Ed Gould Gay & Lesbian Center, Hollywood, CA. Contact: Michael Szymanski 323-969-0328 or mikeszy@aol.com, Paulette Wills: apwills@thegrid.net, Clare Watson: clare@alumni.caltech.edu

October 22-24, 1999, Texas Regional Bi Conference in Houston. Contact bihouse@flash.net. Theme: Celebrating The Bisexual Family of Choice.

Roundtable from page 1

I'm going to try to raise my daughter with that foundation. I haven't been in a relationship with a woman long enough to feel like I need to cross that bridge with her. "This is who this friend is..." And I'd love to hear thoughts and experiences of moms who have officially come out to their kids and how that is different from incorporating any other relationship. Whether I was dating a man or a woman that still affects her little world in a major way. I think that's the bigger impact, frankly, than what the sex the person is.

I'm Michelle. I've known all my life that I am bi, it's one of those things when you're a little kid and you know that you are just a little bit different. You don't just want to play doctor with the boys, but you're not into a full-fledged sexuality. Never had any serious relationships with women, I dated women, but my serious relationships were all with men. I think because of just where I grew up and around people, it was all that was available to you, it was a really closed society, you didn't talk about things like that. I grew up in New Hampshire; I was born in the Boston area and grew up there. It's a different kind of world for a kid growing up there. Very white suburban, everything happens in progression, people don't generally leave their town, that sort of thing. For a long

time I very much repressed that side of my personality — not just my sexuality, but really it's part of my personality — because there was a mental connection that there was something wrong with it, something dirty about it, not natural about it. And it wasn't until I moved down to the Cambridge area that I felt it was a lot more accepted. There were a lot of people around me. That's when I dated some women, dated some men. I moved away to L.A. and had no intentions whatsoever of being in any kind of committed relationship in any way and I was free to date men and women, and within six months of moving out there I met my husband. I never thought I would get married or wanted to. He's just a great guy. And he's the same way, he never wanted to get married, and both of us wanted kids but neither of us wanted to get married. And we met each other as kindred spirits and so now we have our little family, our boy and our girl and we're all set.

There is some reconciling being bi with being a parent. I look at my daughter and I wonder if she's going to grow up like me. You know how you kid around with your kids about grandkids, stuff like that. I always qualify it, if you don't go that route that's OK with me, too. And I never look at it that I hope she doesn't grow up like me because it caused so many problems because for me it hasn't. I like being who I am and the way I am, but I worry about how it's going to impact her when she gets

Those First Inklings


By Abby Stevens

In the third grade I had an enormous crush on a charming and athletic boy named Rich. During recess, when it was "boys against girls" time on the playground, I'd tackle any boy I could get my hands on but always spared Rich because I didn't want to injure him and make him hate me. I used to run around on the grass screaming, "It's the battle of the sexes!" And Rich would laugh.

At this time, I also had an enormous crush on Wendy. Wendy liked to touch my curly hair. She would rub the top of my head to see how the curls felt, and giggled. She gave me warm fuzzies inside. Without exaggeration, Wendy always remained genuinely sweet from grade school through high school. Though I haven't seen her since I graduated, I have a feeling she has never changed.

I remember having crushes on boys all through school. But other than Wendy, to be honest, I only remember being infatuated with Donna Summer. I stole her albums from the local library and played them over and over. From the fourth grade on I thought the woman was a Goddess. It wasn't until college that I started acknowledging to myself the crushes I had on women — not rock stars, but women I knew personally.

I've had one serious relationship with a man and I've gone on dates with men. I haven't dated women or been intimate with a woman. I have fallen in love with women but was too fearful to act on my feelings. I am mainly attracted to bi women simply because I relate to them better. I used to think because I'd never been intimate with a woman, I didn't have the right to call myself bi. Is sex "the" initiation into a sexual orientation? Of course not. My heart is my guide.

I've lived in the Boston area for ten years and I'm just now coming out of my shell. The fact that I'm involved with the BBWN, which is an honor, and the fact that I'm ready to meet more kindred spirits and make bosom friends (Stop it! You know what I mean!) tells me that there's hope. I'm so glad for the Bisexual Resource Guide, mailing lists, and websites out there. These resources are invaluable and have enlightened as well as inspired. 

older and is a lot more cognizant of differences. I have a lot of concern about [them understanding] your dad and I are married but there have been times when there is another person involved in our lives. As babies they don't notice that kind of stuff, but when they get older they do. Especially if they go talking to the family about this thing. My family knows, but they think it was a phase way back and I've grown out of it now that I'm married.

Sue: You've been saved.

Michelle: I have a born again Christian mother so don't even joke about that. (Laughs) My mother thought I had some kind of evil demon or something. So how are they going to take that? Are they going to be really cool kids about the whole thing or are they going to think mom's a freak?

My husband and I are also open to the possibility of someone being involved in our life seriously, too. That would just be a major thing in their lives so that is one of those bridges that I'll pass if I ever come to it. What happens then? How do your kids take having a third person in your lives, in all of the ways that that impacts them? Luckily, we'll be living in L.A. and people seem to be a lot more accepting of different people there.

I'm Sue. I've got four kids. Thirteen, ten, six, and four. I've had serious relationships with women, long term and short term, and my parents thought I was saved when I got married ten years ago. I lived in Santa Cruz so I had relationships with men, I had them with women, you didn't even put a label on it. There were whispers, "She goes both ways." But we didn't put any label on it. This was in the early eighties so there wasn't a whole lot going on, there was some in San Francisco with Lani Kaahumanu. She was doing stuff in San Francisco and we took a little bit of notice, but down in Santa Cruz we are all laid back and we were not really noticing. I came out here and I told my bestfriend and roommate I was going to be late on my rent because I had a well baby check for my almost two-year-old and he said "You know, she could be on my insurance if we were to be married." And I knew this was as romantic as the guy gets so we got married and we had three more kids. I tried the straight thing and it didn't go and I came back out to him and I said you know I'm still bi. And he said well, yeah. So, I started doing work in the community with GLBT groups.

And it does effect the kids, you have people coming in and out of your life and they do take notice. I think my daughter was ten when she said "What's up with this friend of yours?" We were bra shopping of all places, driving down the road coming back from bra shopping the first time and she's like "You guys kiss." And I

said "Well, yeah." And she said, "Are you a lesbian, mom?" And I almost drove off the road. And I said, "Do you know what a lesbian is?" She said, "It's women who like women." I said, "It's women who *only* like women." And she said, "Well, if you're that then what's up with dad." And her biggest thing was is dad OK with this? And that's what she wanted to know. Kids will ask what they want to know. And she went through my whole line of friends, is such and such like this? No. Is such and such like this? I'd say "Yes, she is." And she went down the whole line and she said, "Those are all nice people." And she said, "And dad's OK." And I said, "He knows and he's OK." And that was the end of it for a year or two. Actually for about a year.

And then the next year she asked, "What do two women do together?" And this is the child at seven years who had said, "OK, mom, I want to know what goes where?" And when I told her daddy's penis goes into mommy's vagina, she said, "And you do that in *this* house?" And I said, "Yes." So she wanted to know what two women do together and I explained somewhat nervously. They see same sex couples come in the house, our casual friends, and they are affectionate as all people are. I think it's important through being involved in your children and having them being involved in your life to show them through example that it's not taboo.

Now, when they go out into their school they see it is a big deal. And sometimes they stick up for this weirdness and try to break down those walls. My daughter was at camp, Girl Scout camp, and as we all know a lot of lesbians work as counselors. It was either last year or the year before, she was eleven or twelve and she said, "Mom some of the kids were picking on these counselors because they were lesbians." And I said, "What did you say?" I was very proud of her. She said, "I told them that wasn't right because these people were taking us out and they're singing songs and making campfires for us and we're having a great time and I told them it wasn't right, that these were nice people." "That's very nice, and did you tell them your mom was bi?" And she said "God, no, mom." They find their own ways to react in the world and they know the limits in the classroom, in the school, in the schoolyard, in different situations, and they find their own way. They are smarter than we actually give them credit for.

My son who is only ten, he tends to see heterosexual as normal and he's just starting to ask, "Does such and such love such and such? But they're both men." And I said, "Some men love men, some women love women, some people love both." And he says "You love both don't you, mom." I said, "Yes, I love both." And they drop it. And sometimes you're shocked at these questions, and you just answer honestly and just tell them what you think.

Lesbian Mothers Symposium

The Community and Academic Research on Mothering Association, "cARMA" in celebration of Pride Day, is hosting a one-day International Symposium "Lesbian Mothering" on Saturday June 12, 1999 at Atkinson College, York University in Toronto, Canada. The symposium will feature fifteen presenters including researchers, community workers, writers and academics from Canada, the U.S. and the U.K. A wine and cheese reception will launch the inaugural issue of the Journal of the Association for Research on Mothering. For more information please contact: Andrea O'Reilly and Christy Taylor, Conference Coordinators, ARM c/o 726 Atkinson College, York University, 4700 Keele St., North York, Ontario, Canada M3J 1P3, 416-736-2100 x60366; arm@yorku.ca. Registration is free for members of ARM/cARMA; \$15.00 Canadian for non-members.

FCHC Begins Violence Recovery Program

Fenway Community Health Center has started a Violence Recovery program for members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender communities of Massachusetts who have been victims of hate crimes, harassment, domestic violence, and sexual assault. The program offers someone to talk to about how the violence is affecting you, information on your rights and options, safety planning and documentation. Referrals to sensitive medical, legal, or social support services are available. The Violence Recovery Program's counseling, advocacy, and other services are provided free of charge. If you or someone you know is in need of our services, please contact us at 617-927-6250 or 1-800-834-3242.

If you are not out to your family that can get sticky. My parents know, they thought I was saved when I married Dave and I had to come out to mom and dad again. My mother did the standard, "What can two girls do together anyway, sweetheart." It's not a big deal, they kind of go along with it. And sometimes you worry about whether they are going to go to the parish priest and say my mom loves both men and women. They tend to find the even keel to know that these are not the people I feel comfortable saying this to. And my daughter doesn't tell a lot of friends; I think one of her friends knows.

I'm sure I'll have mountains to climb with the rest of them as they get older. And we have bumpy roads like everybody, but I think even if I was heterosexual or if I was a lesbian, everyone has those funky spots to deal with. I think the major thing is to be involved with your kids, show them how you live your life as an example.

And sometimes it hurts them, too. They might say "What happened to Christine?" and I'll say we had a difference of opinion, something like that. And I still have ex-girlfriends who still come up and babysit and come to birthday parties and are involved in my life and with my kids and sometimes Dave and I talk about the third person who would share our life. But to us, that third person would have to be so perfect in every way, there are so many facets, there are so many toes that can get stepped on, so many relationships that act between Dave, between the four kids, between me; it bounces back and forth so many times, we don't see that situation happening for us. Dave gets his weekends away, I get my weekends away. Basically, the hardest part of my life of being a bi mom is scheduling. If I'm going to go away for my weekend, then he's going to want his weekend away and that's fair, so scheduling is my biggest problem.

Ellyn: How have you found being a bi mom in the bi community? When you are meeting people or looking for support groups or whatever?

Michelle: For me, I haven't spent a lot of time in strictly bi community; I move around way too much, unfortunately, to throw down roots. Around other people who are bi, there seem to be distinct types of people. Around bi people who tend to be more political, more active in group situations, things like that, they seem to have a better understanding of who they are and where they are. Around bi people who might be a little more closed off about being bi — there are some friends of mine who being bi is strictly a sexual thing with them — they tend to compartmentalize me as person, and me as mother, and they don't want anything like that to taint the motherhood or vice versa. If we are going out to hang out they don't want the idea

of me as mom creeping into that.

Bonnie: I don't know that I have a lot of experience doing specifically bi events, or activities, more often than that I'm doing all women's things, and I'm a mom, that's just a part of who I am. If I'm getting to know somebody, if I'm dating somebody, whatever, it's just what comes up. My experience has been that there are a lot of women who have all sorts of questions and fears about what it would mean to get involved with someone who is bisexual and who has a kid. They think this isn't what I was planning on. The majority of those who I'm encountering are not moms. They are single women without kids. Sometimes it is a double whammy, she's got a kid and she's bi, how does that work?

Sue: Try being married, too.

Bonnie: I bet. I feel fortunate in that way at the moment. And then there are other women who are getting to know ME and that's just a part of who I am. That's how it is and there's an attraction here, a chemistry here, let's explore that and see what happens, as opposed to the concept of what does it mean to be involved with someone who describes themselves as bisexual. Which is the most that I can do, too. Am I going to want to be with women the rest of my life? I don't know. Will I switch back to men at some point? I don't know. Will I want both simultaneously? I don't know. For me, it's the relationship and the quality of the relationship. Right now, I've been seeing a woman for about three months and it is just a really great relationship, and we both decided we're just not going to name it. And the whole world wants you to, well, what's happening with you two. We're having fun, we're enjoying each other and that's just where we are leaving it.

Sue: I find in the groups that are activist or political, even support and resource, I tend to be the only mom. So I tend to end up being the token. And they don't see it as being odd. Some people see it as going against some kind of grain to be a mother and feel that you can be open about your sexuality.

Michelle: I think that some people don't like to think of moms as sexual beings period, much less bisexual.

Ellyn: And also of thinking of a married person as non-monogamous. And being honest about it, that's what's different.

Michelle: Oh, yeah, that is horrible. And I am so sick of the swinger stereotype. People think that you are just a dirty, nasty old couple.

Sue: And is he going to want to watch? I don't think so.

Michelle: Well, you see, neither of us have separate relationships, a lot of people do. For us, if we have any relationships we have them together. I heard the term polyamory about a year ago, and I think that that describes us more accurately.

Sue: You see, my relationships are usually separate. They've always been separate. And he's not really against being with a girlfriend of mine but it hasn't worked out that way. Our taste in women is extremely different.

Michelle: Ours are right on target.

Sue: Dave is real shy and it takes a long time to get to know him. I knew him eight years before we even got married. I think it takes a lot, he really has to love somebody, and I do, too. I have to have some kind of feelings for somebody to have sex with them but for him it takes an extra amount of time. He would just be happy if he can get along with my girlfriends. We've had situations where he's met somebody and he says "Wow, she's super, date her." Just because he can get along with her, and talk to her -- of course I wasn't attracted to her. When they hear "bisexual-

ity" they should not assume the situation at all.

Michelle: That's one of the things that we worry about with our kids is that people really assume so much, especially in the situation of being polyamorous. It's frustrating on a lot of levels, people connote that as there's something wrong with us. There's just sex, there's something dirty about that. There's a real aura around that.

Ellyn: Or somebody in there is being exploited.

Michelle: Yes, you and your relationship are secure, you have each other and there is this third party and you are preying on them. That's another thing I worry about for my kids is are there going to be a lot of transient. Not that there are a lot of people in our lives, but over the years.

Sue: We really carefully pick and choose, I really carefully pick and choose who comes home to meet the gang. I really have to be adamant about it because I don't like that transient period that tweaks at my kids. It's OK if I'm having a gang of people over and met as just friends, but I really have to know

Roundtable continues on page 8

Women's Conference

The Ninth Annual Women and Society Conference will be held June 11-13 at Marist College in Poughkeepsie, NY. The conference commences with concurrent panels on all aspects of women, feminism, and gender being explored in the academy, and beyond. Ann Pellegrini will be delivering the keynote address on Saturday afternoon. Sunday there will be a roundtable discussion on Feminism in the Millenium that will take place at Kate Millett's Woman Art Colony and Farm. Registration is \$90 prior to May 25 (\$80 for graduate students) and \$125 at the door. Registration covers everything except dinners and housing. For more information, please contact: Dr. J. A. Myers 914-575-3000 ext 2234.

Nephew from page 1

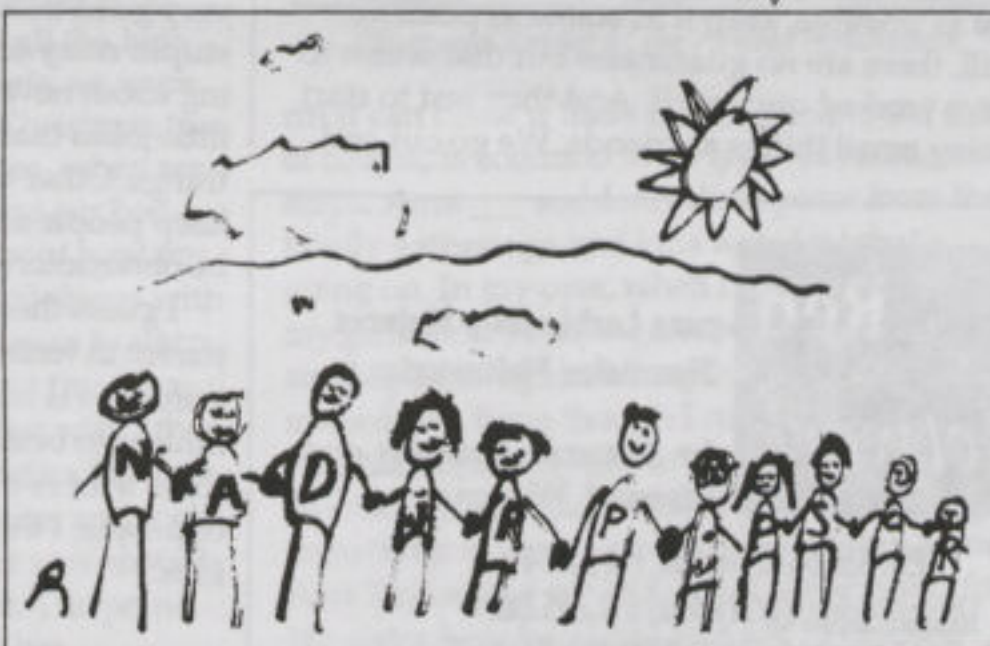
While I have no regrets, there is nothing in this world more delicious than a child's smile. Children, especially young children, are honest in their emotional expression. When my brother's oldest son, who is six, runs smiling across the room shouting "Aunt Robyn's here!" and hurls himself into my arms as I enter his home, I am honored. When he says "I want to sit next to Aunt Robyn," I feel as though I'd won the Nobel Prize. When his three year old brother takes me by the hand and invites me to play with him, I am thrilled. And when one (or more) of the little ones invites me into his imagination, or climbs into my lap while we're watching a video together, I feel so happy my heart aches.

And my partner and I get to be walking role models. We go together to most family events, and the little ones love her. After all, she listens to them, plays with them, and she brings the best toys. Two trips ago it was a laser light, and most recently she brought a pair of walkie talkies. This past visit Nicky, the six-year-old, spontaneously called my partner "Aunt Peg," officially

adopting her into the family. And when he drew a family portrait, she was in it, standing right next to me.

We are my family's only same sex couple. I like to think that the kids will grow up more thoughtful and open minded as a result. After all, they already know that not all couples consist of a man plus a woman. I didn't learn that until I was a teenager.

There's one more baby coming in October. Wanna bet it's another boy? ▼



Nephew Nicky's family portrait includes Robyn and Peg (R and P at center of drawing).

Adrienne Rich Reading



In a benefit for the Bromfield Street Educational Foundation, internationally renowned poet and writer, Adrienne Rich will read her poetry and speak about the importance of multi-issue politics in the fight for social justice on Thursday, July 15. Winner of the prestigious MacArthur Fellowship, Rich is the author of more than 16 volumes of poetry, including her latest, *Midnight Salvage*. The benefit will be held at Kresge Auditorium at MIT, 84 Mass. Ave., Cambridge at 7:30pm. Tickets are \$10 in advance; \$15 at the door; \$25 BSEF Angel. Group rates available. Buy 20 or more tickets and get half price (\$5.00 per ticket). Tickets will be on sale at New Words Bookstore, Rhythm and Muse, Glad Day, Brookline Booksmith, and Wood and String.

The Bromfield Street Educational Foundation publishes Gay Community News, produces the OutWrite Conference, and coordinates the Gay and Lesbian Prisoners Project. Call Bromfield Street at 617-262-6969 with any questions.

Roundtable from page 7

someone really well in order to introduce the kids to a special friend. I think that trying to build a stable atmosphere for them is what I want to do by doing that, and they need that.

Michelle: I wouldn't want to introduce them to anybody that I think is going to be around for a week. That helps to cast an odd light on any other relationship, too, because then you have to keep them away from your kids until you know so much more about them. We met a couple last summer that was a bisexual couple also and we actually met them over the internet and were talking for months and then we finally agreed to get together for dinner. And they seemed like really great people. When these people came over there was this instant, what did I just do? People that I don't really know, and this is the only level of connection, although we had been talking over email for months, and they really seemed like great people — they could have been psychopaths and I just invited these people over. It was a really bad idea. It worked out perfectly fine, they were very nice people. But that's nothing I would ever do again; you just need to know so much more about people before you let them anywhere in the vicinity of your kids.

Bonnie: My lifestyle is such that my daughter is with her father about three days a week, so every week I have days where it's just me in the house so I have time built in when I am a single woman. And that is the majority of time that I have for relationship time, where I can go out or have people over. My rule of thumb, whether it's been male or female, I don't spend time with my daughter involved until or if it reaches a point it seems to me it's going to be a longer term thing. Because I do that on my own time, and I have every right to do that but I want as few people coming in and out of her life as possible, keep it as stable as possible. Still, there are no guarantees but that seems to have worked quite well. And then just to start doing small things as friends. We go out and

get an ice cream together and this is my friend so and so and occasionally she'll do things that way. But I don't have someone sleep over while she's there.

Ellyn: Are you out to your ex-husband?

Bonnie: No. We still have court stuff. There were a lot of good reasons that I divorced that man. So there is still that going on and I have a court date in May so I'm being really conscious about what I tell her, not because the relationship I'm in right now is not something I wouldn't mind sharing with her more, it's just I don't want to add one more complexity to my life and he is the type of person to make something out of it. There's nothing wrong with it in my mind and heart, but he would try to do something. It has to do with my relationship with my daughter and I don't want any court to do anything that's going to jeopardize that, so for now I am not out to him and I figure after these issues get settled then I'll feel more free to be out to her.

Ellyn: Have you found it difficult when you are meeting other women? What's their first impression when they find out you are a mom?

Bonnie: It all depends on who they are. I tend to do things with older women, I'm 43, some of them have kids, but it's still rare, I'm the minority. Then we can chat about having kids. One woman I dated for a while and it was a big adjustment for her and she kept talking about it, yet she was also good with kids and open to it as well. That was mixed but pretty good. And the woman I'm with now doesn't have any kids; she likes kids, and is willing to learn about kids and it's OK. It's not what she's envisioned for herself next but it's the reality, it's OK.

Ellyn: Have you had anyone come down on you for choosing to be a parent and living a bisexual life?

Michelle: Come down on me, no, but I have a very good friend of my husband's who made a stupid nasty comment about it. Not really thinking about how insensitive he was being, stupid little jokes that play up the strangeness aspect of things. Other than family, no. Thank god I don't keep people anywhere near my life who would be obnoxious about things like that.

I guess there is one thing about being a bi parent in terms of its affect on kids and I don't think this is limited to just being bi, I think it's limited to being the kind of person you are. I think a lot of bi people turn out to be these kind of people. I think we'll produce more interesting kids.



La Red para Lesbianas y Mujeres
Bisexuales Maltratadas

The Network for Battered Lesbians and
Bisexual Women

P.O. Box 6011; Boston, MA 02114
Office/Oficina: (V/TTY/fax) 617.695.0877
Hotline/Línea de Crisis: (V/TTY) 617.423.SAFE
e-mail/correo electrónico: nbibw@erols.com

They Are Not As Naive As We Think

By [REDACTED]

Since I can remember, I've been working with children in all types of capacities. I've been their coach, friend, peer, caretaker, professional....the list goes on. Even now, three years after coming out as bisexual to my family and friends (but not always in the work place), I continue to work with children. It's from these experiences that I'm able to report to you that children are not as naive as we often think.

One such experience happened recently. I've been working as a personal assistant for an executive whose thirteen-year-old daughter made me just that much more aware of the knowledge and understanding children have today about "The Community." We were driving along in the car one day when I asked Emily if she wouldn't mind handing me my sunglasses from the glove compartment. As she opened the glove box, there lay the only rainbow sticker I'd been able to muster the courage to apply to my car. I froze! What was she thinking? What did she know, if anything, about rainbows and their possible meanings in today's world? Well, she just turned to me and said, "Hey, [REDACTED] Your sticker's coming off. Do you have any tape to fix it with?" WOW! Was I relieved! Not a "What is this?" or "Why do

you have one of these in your glove box?" Just the simple fact that my sticker was coming off. Well, I thought I got out of that one. I thought to myself she probably has no clue what that's all about anyway.

But a few weeks later, we were again driving in the car and this time there was another car in front of us with a rainbow sticker on the rear bumper. Emily shouted, "Hey!! There's another rainbow sticker just like yours!" and she opened up the glove box in my car to point it out to me again as if I didn't know it was there. This time I was more prepared and just said, "Yeah. It is like mine, isn't it?" Then I got bold and asked if she knew what it meant. And she just turned to me and said, "Of course I do! Doesn't everyone. We learned about it at school. We have a Coming Out week at school where we discuss all sorts of issue about gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and stuff. The rainbow sticker is a sign to show people that you support diversity. You know? That it's okay to be gay or have friends that are gay. I think that's so cool!!" "Me too," I said with a smile. "Me too." And that was the end of our conversation, but the beginning of a wonderful friendship. ▽

GLBT Youth Helpline



The Peer Listening Line of the Fenway Community Health Center is a nationwide toll free number staffed by GLBT youth for other gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered and questioning youth. Trained volunteers provide information, referrals, and support to callers Monday through Friday, 4:00 p.m.-10:00 p.m. The local number is 617-267-2535 and toll free number is 1-800-399-PEER (7337).

The Acceptance of Children

By Ellyn Ruthstrom

I'm a bi aunt, but I was just realizing that all of my nieces and nephews were born after I was divorced from my husband and they have only seen me in a relationship with a woman. So to them I might as well be a lesbian, and since no one in the family ever makes an issue about me being with a woman they don't seem to think it's odd either. In fact, if the occasion arises in the future that I do bring a man to a family occasion they might think that was strange.

When my ex-girlfriend and I would go to family occasions it was known by all the kids that we slept together. At my sister's we were on the pull out couch next to the Christmas tree, kind of hard to miss. And, of course, when we moved in together they knew it was *our* bedroom. My sister told me a story about how my niece Taylor said to her one day "El sleeps with Janice because she doesn't have a man to sleep with." My sister talked to her about this idea, pointing out that not everyone slept with other people - some people sleep alone like Taylor's great-grandmother and Snow White, and some people don't sleep with men. That was enough for her to ponder for that moment. The point about Snow White really soothed her.

Of course, the painful flipside of having your girlfriend accepted into the family unit is the



Ellyn and Taylor at the Arnold Arboretum.

rift it can cause if there is a break up. And this, of course, is common to all types of relationships. Aunt ___ suddenly disappears from the family gatherings and kids wonder what's going on. In my case, when I moved out from my girlfriend's and began seeing the family as a single person again, all my nieces and nephews missed her. Even though I could tell their parents had told them not to bring it up, that it would make me sad, each of them would say something at some point when we were alone. And Taylor told my sister that she was sad for her sister Kate because I was for Taylor and

Acceptance continues on page 11

Photo by Natalie Rivkin

Woman-to-Woman Sexual Violence

A researcher is conducting a nationwide survey of women who have been sexually assaulted by another woman. If you are a lesbian, bisexual or transgendered/transsexual woman (living full-time) you are invited to participate in this study. Your participation is confidential. For a copy of the survey and a postage-paid return envelope, please contact: Lori B. Girshick, Ph.D., WWC-6124, P.O. Box 9000, Asheville, NC 28815-9000 or e-mail: lgirshic@warren-wilson.edu or call: 828-298-3325, ext. 378 no later than August 31, 1999. Dr. Girshick is a sociology/women's studies professor and has worked with battered women for nine years, including battered lesbians. She has written two books; her latest, *No Safe Haven: Stories of Women in Prison*. She is a rape survivor, who is dedicated to social justice and works to stop interpersonal violence.

Don't Bisexuals Need Roommates Too?

Recently, Johanna Bates went to sign on with The Roommate Connection, a roommate matching company in the Boston area. Johanna wanted to share her email correspondence with the Boston bi community. It's amazing that Mr. Light doesn't see why bis would want gay people to know they are bi, considering his own biphobia.

Hello,

I was planning on signing up for your service, until I got to the sexual orientation question. I have the choices "Straight," "Lesbian," and "Gay." I am bisexual, and would want a roommate to be comfortable with the fact that I date both genders. Your application did not provide me with adequate options. As a result, I will not be using your service. I will be certain to make sure that others in the Boston queer community are aware of your short-sightedness as well.

J. Bates

Dear J:

I'm sorry that you feel that we are "shortsighted." The Roommate Connection has been in business for twenty years, and is owned, staffed, and operated by gay men and women. We get approximately 4 bisexuals per year registering with this agency, which is why we don't screen on that factor — it is not a significant number. We don't screen on vegetarianism and other situations for the same reason — they are just not common requests. The way we screen is that if you list yourself as "gay" you will receive straight and gay people who don't CARE. Some may be gay, some may be straight, but none care about YOU. This has worked just fine for people for twenty years. We have a stellar reputation in the Boston gay/lesbian community, and intend to keep it that way. In fact, I am the founder and past president of the Greater Boston Business Council, which is the second largest gay/lesbian business organization in the country. I'm sorry you feel that we are being shortsighted.

Sincerely, Fred Light

Dear Mr. Light,

I have no doubt that your business is the best in Boston — that is what I have heard through the grapevine. Perhaps you don't get applicants from "biesexuals" because you do not provide that as an option on your form. The Boston area has an enormous bi population, and I think that it would not be difficult for you to include "bisexual" and possibly even "transgender" on your form. Unlike the other two major roommate companies in Boston, you do at least give a place for "No Answer." However, I feel uncomfortable setting up an expectation with a potential roommate that I am either straight or gay. Though I am involved with a woman now (I am a woman), marking gay does not ensure a potential roommate "won't care." There is a great deal of prejudice toward bisexuals in the Gay and Lesbian Community. I would not want to meet several lesbians who would have a problem with me because I also date men and probably will again. I am neither gay nor straight. Either one I mark would be a lie, and inaccurate. "No answer" causes me to fear risking meeting with someone, gay or straight, who is biphobic. I am very uncomfortable being asked to put myself in that potentially painful situation by a service for which I would be paying money — which is supposed to be helping me. I do not see why it would be an inconvenience to you to add a "bisexual" option to your form — at the very least. Your service's name will be or has been published in at least one bisexual newsletter, and on several Boston-area and national bi and bi/lesbian email lists. There are many of us hoping that you may be willing to change your form to facilitate better roommate matching with fewer potential opportunities for painful prejudice.

Thank you, Johanna Bates

Johanna:

As I mentioned, we cannot screen by everything, although we would like to. We get requests all the time for people wanting us to screen based on race, religion, kosher, transgendered, bisexual, vegan, pagan, vegetarianism and a hundred other options. In addition, law dictates that certain things cannot be discriminated against....we are not allowed to "withhold" information from customers on a number of issues. In fact, we are already pushing it to screen on the gay/straight issue... it's a very grey area and so far it's never been brought up as an "issue," but we have to be careful. Our gay/lesbian customers appreciate it because essentially we're screening out "homophobes," which is all most people really care about. But it's still a very grey [legal] area that we must tread lightly upon. I appreciate your feedback, and next time we redesign our applications we will take it under consideration.

Sincerely, Fred Light



BETH DAMSKY, MSW, LICSW

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Cambridge, MA 02140
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Time: The Ultimate Healer

by Linda Blair

Time is a healer
Excruciating too
Days pass so slowly
How can I stop wanting you?
Hardest thing I'll ever do

Light blinks. Dare I hope?
Could it ever be from you?
Drive myself crazy.
Do you even have a clue?
Hardest thing I'll ever do.

Summer of fire and
Fall of pain. Breathe. Stretch. Move.
Fight back. Hate. Resist. — Accept.
There is nothing else to do.

Make dinner, wash clothes.
It's all the same, work or play.
Time aches, dull and numb
Day after day after day.

"Yah, thanks. Sure. Sounds fun.
Hey, did you invite her too?"
Excitement, fear, all for naught
Here I am alone and blue.
Days go by, I make it through.

Ice melts. Winter fades
Days grow longer, spring has sprung.
Darkest times now gone
Warm rays of the sun.
Downhill road has now begun.

Work out. Breathe. Pump hard.
I'm scared but I still just might
Train every day for
Long days journeys into night
Who could know but this feels right

Summer slips away
With a million things to do
There's not much time to reflect
But sometimes I still miss you
Training time is almost through

September arrives

It's hard to believe it's true
Does my fear show through?
I'm told this ride might be the
Hardest thing I'll ever do.

Ride hard. Sleep well. Eat.
Three days fly by a success.
I've survived these tests.
And just in the nick of time
Hardly a minute to rest.

Time is a healer
Don't give up, endure, hold on.
Breathe in. Breathe out long.
Just waiting from dusk to dawn.
Hardest thing I've ever done. ▽

Acceptance from page 9

Janice was for Kate and Kate would miss her.

I recently had my first sleepover with Taylor. She came over to my apartment and rolled in her little overnight bag stuffed with clothes, a teaset, and a few other toys to keep her happy. She also brought Nickie, her favorite teddy bear. We spent the evening coloring and reading, went out for ice cream, watched a little of *Mary Poppins* and then I tucked her and Nickie into bed. When I went to bed a few hours later, she had sprawled herself widthwise across my queen size futon. ("Why is your bed so low," she had asked?) I gingerly got her small body back into a lengthwise position so that I could have at least some space to sleep. When I saw her in that most vulnerable of moments — in sleep — I felt so thankful for her trust in me that she could sleep so soundly beside me.

The following day we were walking in the Arboretum and we ran into some friends of mine. I introduced Taylor to them and they asked her what we had been doing. Did she mention the ice cream parlor or the video or the trip to the Museum of Science we had just made? No. She told them that she got to sleep with El in her bed last night. That was her highlight. My heart felt full.

All of my nieces and nephews are under the age of seven so there will be plenty of opportunities over time for them to understand that I am bisexual. Right now I just appreciate the fact that they accept me for who I am. It's one of those amazing qualities that children seem to possess. ▽

Pride in Health Breakfast



The 4th Annual Pride in Health Breakfast is taking place Friday, June 18, 9:00 a.m. - noon at the Tremont House Hotel in Boston. Sponsored by the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Health Access Project and JRI Health, the guest speakers at the event are Dr. Judith Bradford and Dr. Lisa Weissmann. The Pride in Health Breakfast honors the critical role of community-based agencies, health professionals, and the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender communities in improving the health of GLBT people across Massachusetts. For more information call Karyn Kaplan at 617-988-2605 x202

Volunteer for Action

So, how much *Action* are *YOU* getting lately? Too much? Too little? Always room for more? Why not volunteer for some Action, Saturday, June 12th and watch your luck unfold?! Hanarchy Now and ToolBox Productions are looking for an abundance of (s)heroes to save the day. See www.hanarchy.com/volunteers.html and then send your name and phone number to evcevece@hotmail.com. Fly by just for the night or volunteer your powers NOW through Pride.

BOSTON PRIDE

Bi Pride Starts Here!

Pride Day in Boston is Saturday, June 12, but activities go on throughout the week. At press time all the details were not final, so please check *Bay Windows* for information closer to the date.

Join the Boston bisexual community for the annual Bi Brunch at Community Church of Boston right in Copley Square. If you have never attended this brunch make it a point to this year. It is a great way to start your Pride Day (sounds like a new cereal, maybe Fruit Loops) in the festive atmosphere of a bunch of bis. After the brunch, those who wish to head over to line up in the parade. Or, take a place on the route and cheer everyone else along. The parade ends at Boston Common where there will be a stage for performers and speakers, and vendors and organizations vying for your attention (and your money). The BRC always has a table, so please stop by and say hello.

5TH ANNUAL BOSTON DYKE MARCH
Friday, June 11, 1999, 7p.m. Copley Square

This year's Dyke March is focusing on Sex. In the march statement, the organizers state "Sexual liberation is personal and political. We are sex-positive dykes, out and proud, feminist and progressive. We march in celebration of our diverse sexualities. Sex is connected to and visible within all aspects of our community. We honor all forms of dyke sexuality: monogamy, polyamory, celibacy, SM, B&D, masturbation, cunnilingus, sodomy, fetishism, Trans-sex, group sex, sex toys, Tantric, phone and on-line, tribadism, erotic prose and poetry, genderplay & crossdressing, pornography, vanilla. How do you have sex? Show us!"

Of course, all of these kinds of sex can be a part of bisexual sex lives but there is no direct inclusion of bi-sex, unless we take group sex to include both sexes. I know there are plenty of bi women who attend the Dyke March each year and feel connected to it, but I really do wonder if any sex depicting opposite sex partners would be "acceptable" to the group. We shall see. Call 617-232-0543 or email Sara@post.harvard.edu for more information.

ACTION: PRIDE NIGHT
Saturday, June 12, 9 p.m. - 2 a.m. South Building, Massachusetts College of Art, 623 Huntington Ave.

This year Hannah Doress and Amatul Hannan are producing another of their incredible queer events for Boston Pride Night. They are reaching out to multiple communities to create ACTION: Pride 99 Party for Women of All Colors and their friends. The advisory committee to the producers includes three promi-

nent bi activists - Robyn Ochs, Amatul Hannan, and Michelle Oshima - and they are making a concerted effort to make this a comfortable space for all of our queer communities.

There will be two dancefloors, featuring DJ Rennell (Avalon, MOCAA parties, Club 6, Chaps, Randolph Country Club, Freakshow, Axis). Guests are encouraged to dress to impress and consider the following categories: Heroes & Sheroes, Glamour, Sci Fi, Edge and Yourstyle. Celebrated poet, playwright, and lead singer of Sweet Black Molasses, Robin G. White will host the event in her own inimitable style. Other live entertainment TBA. Profits from the event will benefit community groups which serve queer women's communities. There is no smoking inside, guests are welcome to smoke in the outdoor patio.

ACTION!

Pride 1999 Party

for Women of All Colors and their super friends!



From ACTION's own promotion material: "Most important about ACTION is the joy that we feel when we celebrate together. The pain and alienation that our communities live with as a result of racism and other divisions is so omnipresent that it is easy to give up on our dreams of unity. A celebration such as ACTION will inspire us to dream, and to act to create the community we want and deserve. We invite our communities to get ready for ACTION!" The event is wheelchair accessible. Contact 617-629-4727 with any access questions.

Tickets are \$15 at the door, \$12 in advance. Tickets are available for purchase by cash or check only at: Hifi in JP, New Words in Cambridge, and Grand Opening in Brookline. If you purchase a block of 10 tickets during May, each ticket costs only \$10. Call 617-629-4727 x3 for group purchases. There will be a separate, faster line for ticket holders. This is a 21+ event so please bring your driver's license or passport.

NEW ENGLAND PRIDE

New Hampshire Pride Saturday, June 19, Manchester, NH

Kick-off time is 11:00 a.m. Starting point for the march is Victory Common. Ending point is presently Veteran's Park, but that may change. The Pride Festival will be at the Bank of New Hampshire Field at Singer Family Park, So. Commercial Street. Gates open at noon.

Entertainment at the Festival will include the NH Gay Men's Chorus; Don't Harass Betty, a lesbian rock band; Tisha Towers & her Divas of Drag; political comedian Kate Clinton, and others TBA. There will be kids' entertainment as well in a separate area. A wedding for same sex couples will take place at 4:00 p.m. on the river bank.

There will be a full concession on-site. No beverages or food may be brought into the park. You will be asked to open bags and coolers, and may be forced to leave those goods behind.

The festival cost is \$15 for adults; students age 14 & up: \$10; and kids under 14: Free. As usual, there will be work exchange (two hours) available. Check www.nhpride.org for new information.

Human Rights Week: June 14-19, Lawrence, MA

The Gay and Lesbian Community Advocates of Lawrence (GLCAL) organized the first pride march in Lawrence. With an eye towards a connection of issues, GLCAL has expanded the focus. From June 14-19 the Gay and Lesbian Community Advocates of Lawrence will organize and observe Human Rights Week. The week will be an educational opportunity for people around many different issues of oppression and/or human rights. It will be filled with children's activities, films, speakers, panel discussions, and a remembrance vigil. For more information, meeting times, etc, please call [redacted] or Kateri McCarthy at 978-688-3569.

Providence Pride Week: June 13-19

June 13th, Noon, Rainbow Flag Raising and reception at City Hall.

June 19th, 11:00 a.m. Pride Rally at the State House. March to India Point Park for the Festival. Canoes, kayaks and other watercraft will participate in a flotilla on the Providence River.

Come online with BBWN!

BBWN has three new online lists for you to participate on.

bbwn-events is a listing of events for or of interest to BBWN members and other bi and bi-friendly women in and around the Boston area.

bbwn-activist is a list for bi women in the Boston area who would like to help plan, shape, and implement events, programs, actions, and policies of BBWN.

bbwn-chat is a discussion list for BBWN members and other bi and bi-friendly women.

To subscribe to any of these new lists, send e-mail to: lastname-request@lists.home.welcomehome.org (replace lastname with name of list you are subscribing to) and include only the command "subscribe" (without the quotes) in the body of the message.



**We all have
our reasons...
...to help find
an HIV vaccine.**

Fenway Community Health Center is currently enrolling volunteers in an experimental preventive HIV vaccine study.

We need your help!

IF YOU ARE: HIV negative ■ Between 18-60 years old ■ A man who has sex with men ■ A woman at heterosexual risk of HIV infection ♦ Not pregnant or considering pregnancy ♦

Available for 36 months

Study volunteers will be compensated \$225.00 over the course of the study and will receive free HIV counseling and testing.

For more information call 617 927-6450
or email: vaccine@FCHC.org



GLSEN National Conference

The Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) proudly presents its third annual national conference:

Teaching Respect for All '99, October 1-3 in Atlanta, GA at the Westin Peachtree Plaza. Early bird registration rates are available now! Visit www.glsen.org to register today. For additional information please feel free to contact GLSEN at 212-727-0135.

Past BiWomen Themes

BBWN has been doing theme issues for a number of years now. When we try to come up with new ideas for future issues we invariably wonder about what we've already done. Here is a list to jog your memories and to see how many interesting topics we've dealt with over the years.

Inside BBWN
Non Monogamy
Diversity
Networking
Humor
Bi Media
Families/Bi Family Values
Women of Color
Politics
Men
The Erotica Issue
Mothers & Daughters
Travel

Mixed Marriages
Gender
Body Image
Spiritual Journeys
Fiction
International Bis
Sports & Hobbies
Sisterhood
Coming of Age
Politics
The Cyber Issue
Heartache & Healing

Show your VISIBILITY with buttons!

Two roads
diverged in a
yellow wood...
and I took both

HATE IS
NOT
A FAMILY
VALUE

Other designs include:

- If God had meant for people to be bisexual there would be two sexes
- I'm bisexual and I'm NOT attracted to you
- Racism, sexism, homophobia — Recognize the Connections
- Bisexual Pride
- VISIBILITY

Please send \$2.00 per button (includes postage) to
BBWN, P.O. Box 400639, Cambridge, MA 02140

Recessed Blues

By [REDACTED]

she graced the doorway...grabbing my stare with her long fingers...crushed into her pockets without concern for pleasing anybody... including me...she brushed past my offering of possibility ...spitting out a form of an impersonal greeting ...stealing the smile from my eyes and setting my anger on fire...leaving me burning for her...while i resisted crying...to prevent her from wondering what my problem was...having no idea it was my thirst for her interest...in which i would dive into...shedding my inhibitions...on her bedroom floor...like a bee submitting it's life for that one sting...remembering the taste of sun melted honey...before slipping away...and giving in to the unfamiliar... with such a strength...that i pulled my breath back in...for fear my proposition might tumble out my lips...landing in her footprints. ▼

CALENDAR *continued from page 16*

people of color for a potluck dinner and discussion group. This month's topic will be "What Does Being Out Mean to You?" A small donation is requested to help pay for the space. The group meets in the library at the Boston Living Center at 29 Stanhope St. in Boston. Dial 1 to be buzzed in. For more information, call 617-424-9595 and leave a message for Ananda or Maria Christina.

June 29 ♦ Tuesday

Bi Rap at the Women's Center, 7:30-9:00. Topic: "What Makes a Woman Attractive." Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., 617-354-8807.

July 3 ♦ Saturday

Disco Dancing at ManRay, 9 p.m. - 2 a.m. Get down! Get funky! Dance the night away with bi folk and other assorted creatures of the night. ManRay is at 21 Brookline St. in Cambridge. Cover is \$10. No sneakers allowed. Use Central Square on the Red Line.

July 6 ♦ Tuesday

Bi Rap at the Women's Center, 7:30-9:00 p.m. Call 617-354-8807 for topic.

July 7 ♦ Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m. (See June 2nd.)

July 9 ♦ Friday

BiWomen Submissions Deadline. This issue's theme is "Seduction." How do you like to be seduced? How do you seduce others? Do you seduce women differently than you do men? Send articles (on any topic), calendar entries, letters, art, news, and views to: *BiWomen*, P.O. Box 400639, Cambridge, MA 02140 or e-mail to eruthstr@mail.lesley.edu.

July 10 ♦ Saturday

Biversity Naturist Swimming Trip, 9 a.m. We will car-pool to the Cummington clothing-optional swimming site in central Mass. Meet at the bi office at 29 Stanhope Street in Boston. Bring a towel, food, sun-screen, and shoes you can wade in (for crossing a shallow, but rocky river).

BBWN Matinee/Brunch. Time TBA. Meet for a movie and go for food nearby. Call Ellyn 617-926-8737 for details before July 7th. We'll pick a movie that's playing at the time, hopefully something queer.

July 11 ♦ Sunday

Sunday Bi Brunch, 1 p.m. At the Baja Cafe, 109 Dartmouth Street in Boston, about 1/2 block from Cafe Moka on the other side of the street. Nearest T stop is Back Bay on the Orange Line.

Bi Space, 7-9 p.m. First hour's topic: "Bi People With Straight Partners." (See June 6th.)

July 14 ♦ Wednesday

Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting, 7-9 p.m. (See June 9th.)

BBWN Introductory Meeting. A safe space for women to connect with the bisexual community. 7:30 - 9 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. Info: 617-354-8807.

July 17 ♦ Saturday

Biversity Brunch, 11 a.m. Brunch will be at Johnny D's in Davis Square (Somerville), immediately across from the Davis Square Red Line stop.

Biversity Planning Meeting, 1 p.m. Help plan events for the August/September calendar. At the restaurant immediately following the brunch.

July 18 ♦ Sunday

Hike in the Blue Hills, 1 p.m. We'll be car-pooling to the Blue Hills. Meet at the bi office at 29 Stanhope Street in Boston. Bring good shoes, snacks, and water.

July 19 ♦ Monday

Bisexual People of Color Potluck Dinner, 7-9 p.m. Boston Living Center, 29 Stanhope St. This month's topic is "How Did You Learn About Sex?" (See June 28th.)

July 20 ♦ Tuesday

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m. (See June 2nd.)

Bi Rap at the Women's Center, 7:30-9:00 p.m. Call 617-354-8807 for topic.

July 24 ♦ Saturday

Randolph Country Club, 11:30 a.m. (See June 26.)

July 27 ♦ Tuesday

BBWN Pre-mailing Dinner, 6 p.m. at Bertucci's on Stanhope St., just two doors down from the Bi Office.

BiWomen mailing, 7-9 p.m. at the Bi Office. Label, stuff, and lick. We especially want help with licking. Ha!

July 31 ♦ Saturday

Biversity Naturist Swimming Trip at The Ledges, 9 a.m. Car-pool to The Ledges clothing-optional swimming site in southern Vermont. Meet at the bi office at 29 Stanhope St. in Boston. Bring a towel, stuff to eat, and sun-screen.

Biversity Boston is the mixed gender bisexual Network of Greater Boston.

Ongoing Events

1st & 3rd

Thursdays:

Bi Women's Resource & Support Group, 7 p.m. at the Women's Health Consortium, 379 State St., Portsmouth, NH. For info call 603-431-1669 or contact Sue Corcoran at schmoo@nh.ultranet.com.

Women's Club Nights

Saturdays: 10 p.m. - 2 a.m. Lava Bar in Kenmore Square, 575 Commonwealth Ave. at the Howard Johnson's. Great view of the river and kickin music.

Sundays: Ryles in Inman Square. Hampshire St, Cambridge.



SUBSCRIPTION RATE

(sliding scale)

___ \$0-\$20 (pay what you can)
___ \$20-\$30 (suggested)
___ \$30-\$100

___ New Subscriber

___ Renewal

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE (Optional) _____

BBWN, P.O. BOX 400639, Cambridge, MA 02140

The "Bi Office"

is the Bisexual Resource Center, located at 29-33 Stanhope Street, behind Club Cafe, right next door to Bertucci's and just down the street from the Hard Rock Cafe. For info call 617-424-9595.

Ongoing Events

1st & 3rd Tuesdays:

Bi Women's Rap. 7:30 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St, Cambridge. For info and discussion topics call 617-354-8807.

Wednesdays:

Gendertalk. 8:30-9:30 p.m. on WMBR 88.1 FM. Deals with transgender and queer issues.

2nd Thursdays:

Single Jewish Lesbian and Bisexual Women's Group. 6:30-8 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant Street. Info: 617-499-9612

Bi Married Women's Support Group. 7-9 p.m. at the Bi Office. For bi women who are married to or in a relationship with a man. Leave a message for Debbie at 617-424-9595 or e-mail at starfurry@worldnet.net

3rd Thursdays:

SpeakOut Meeting. 8 p.m., at the Boston Living Center, 29-33 Stanhope St, Boston. Wheelchair accessible. General meeting at 6:45 p.m., theme program starts at 8 p.m. Info: 617-354-0133.

CALENDAR

June 1 ♦ Tuesday

Bi Rap at the Women's Center, 7:30-9:00. Topic: "Boston's Bisexual Community and It's Role in Pride." Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., 617-354-8807.

June 2 ♦ Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m. An informal support group for people who think they may be bisexual or attracted to more than one sex. A small donation is requested to help pay for the space. The group meets at the Bisexual Resource Center at 29 Stanhope St. in Boston. Call 617-424-9595 for info.

June 3 ♦ Thursday

BRC Volunteer Night, 7-9 p.m. Thanks to a generous grant, we'll be mailing out copies of the Bisexual Resource Guide to financially strapped student and overseas listed groups. Afterwards, we'll go schmooze and eat at one of the many charming local establishments. Meet at the BRC Office at 29 Stanhope St. in Boston. Call 617-424-9595 for info. Meets every Thursday night.

June 5 ♦ Saturday

Biversity Star Wars Party at Langdon & Sarah's, 6 p.m.-? First party of the summer in Canton. In celebration of the release of Episode I, the theme will be... Star Wars!!! Costumes are encouraged, but not required. The party will last all day, and will be a cookout, weather permitting. Please bring a dish to share. For more details and directions, contact Langdon, Langdon_Roberts@Brown.edu or Sarah, sjf@ziplink.net.

June 6 ♦ Sunday

Biversity Swimming Trip to Singing Beach. This beach in beautiful Manchester-by-the-Sea is accessible by commuter train from North Station. There is a bath house for changing into your suit, and food is available near the Manchester train station. Meet at noon in North Station to catch the 12:15 train.

Bi Space. 7-9 p.m. A friendly discussion space to meet other bisexuals and talk about bisexual issues. Topic for the first hour will be "Masculinity & Femininity." A \$2 donation is requested to help pay for the space. BiSpace is held at the BRC at 29 Stanhope St. in Boston. Dial 1 to be buzzed in.

June 9 ♦ Wednesday

Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting. 7-9 p.m. The BRC board meets monthly to work on educational programs, the bi office, the web site, the international bi organizing, fund raising, etc. All bi community members welcome to attend. The meeting is at 29 Stanhope St. in Back Bay.

June 11-13 ♦ Friday-Sunday

PRIDE WEEKEND: See page 12 for some Boston Pride events. Join us for the **Annual Bi Brunch** (9-11:30 a.m., sliding scale, \$5-10) at Community Church of Boston right in Copley Square, then march with

BBWN, BRC, Biversity, and others! Call 617-424-9595 for late-breaking info.

June 15 ♦ Tuesday

Coming Out as Bisexual. 7-9 p.m. (See June 2nd.)

Bi Rap at the Women's Center, 7:30-9:00. Topic: "The Personals of the Personal Ads." Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., 617-354-8807.

June 18 ♦ Friday

Dancing at ManRay. 9 p.m. - 2 a.m. Dance the night away, bi folk and other assorted creatures of the night. Wear black. ManRay is at 21 Brookline St. in Cambridge. Cover charge is \$10. No sneakers allowed. Nearest T stop is Central on the Red Line.

June 19 ♦ Saturday

Biversity Brunch, 11:30 a.m. It's our annual summer brunch outing to Au Bon Pain in Harvard Square, Cambridge. Nearest T stop is Harvard Square on the Red Line.

June 20 ♦ Sunday

Biversity Bike Trip, 9 a.m. Probably about a 20-mile trip in Lincoln, MA vicinity. Call Arthur at the BRC answering machine, 617-424-9595 or e-mail Arthur at arthurc@mediaone.net.

June 21 ♦ Monday

"Playing Safe With Both Teams: Bisexuality and HIV Prevention" 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. See page 3 for more details.

June 26 ♦ Saturday

Biversity Trip to Randolph Country Club, 11:30 a.m. We'll be car-pooling to the G/L/B country club south of Boston. Swimming, dancing, lounging, cruising. Food available on-site. Meet in front of the bi office at 29 Stanhope Street in Back Bay, Boston. Nearest T stop is Back Bay on the Orange Line.

BBWN Outing to Lava Bar, 10 p.m. Get out to the hottest women's night in Boston. Meet at the club. 575 Comm. Ave, Boston in Kenmore Square at the Howard Johnson's. Separate entrance to the right of the hotel entrance. Meet someone, seduce her, and then write about it for the next issue of *BiWomen*. Ha!



June 27 ♦ Sunday

Sunday Bi Brunch. 1:30 p.m. We'll brunch at Brookline Lunch, 9 Brookline St., Cambridge. From Central Square, go two blocks down Mass Ave. (southeast, towards Boston), and Brookline St. will be on the right (the side nearest the Charles River).

June 28 ♦ Monday

Bisexual People of Color Potluck Dinner, 7-9 p.m. NOTE THE NEW DAY AND TIME. Join other bisexual

CALENDAR continues on page 15

Seduction

Creating A Sensual Mood

By Elle Thomas

Being a great sensual lover means transporting you and your partner to a physical and mental space where you feel safe and free from distractions. The key to creating a sensual mood (in my humble opinion, of course) is pleasing at least three of the five senses simultaneously.

A significant part of giving pleasure is patience and attentiveness. Communication is vital. But it need not all be conversational. In the heat of passion, even a lover who can't articulate verbally will tell you what she (or he) craves. Give yourself over to your partner's rhythms, breathing, and the person she allows herself to be when she is her most raw. Take mental notes for the future. Knowing your partner is crucial — it's impossible to create a fantasy scene on your first date. Preparing ahead doesn't mean you've taken away the excitement! How let down would you be if, on a whim, you put all the effort into setting the scene, and she showed up at your door with a bottle of Midol and a pint of ice cream?

Some basic things to consider are:

Comfort

Paramount to anything in the sexual arena is your and your partner's comfort level. It never should be violated. Communication is imperative. Create a written invitation that describes the time ahead so s/he knows what to expect. Ask for feedback if you feel unsure; invite her/him to direct you.

Focus

Keep the focus on the two of you. Turn off your pagers and phones. Enlist a friend for pet- or child-care so that you have no distractions. Make sure everything works — now is not the time to remember that you ran out of toilet paper or the oven burns everything.

Time

Sensual experiences should not be rushed. Plan to spend the entire day together, or choose an

Sensual continues on page 6

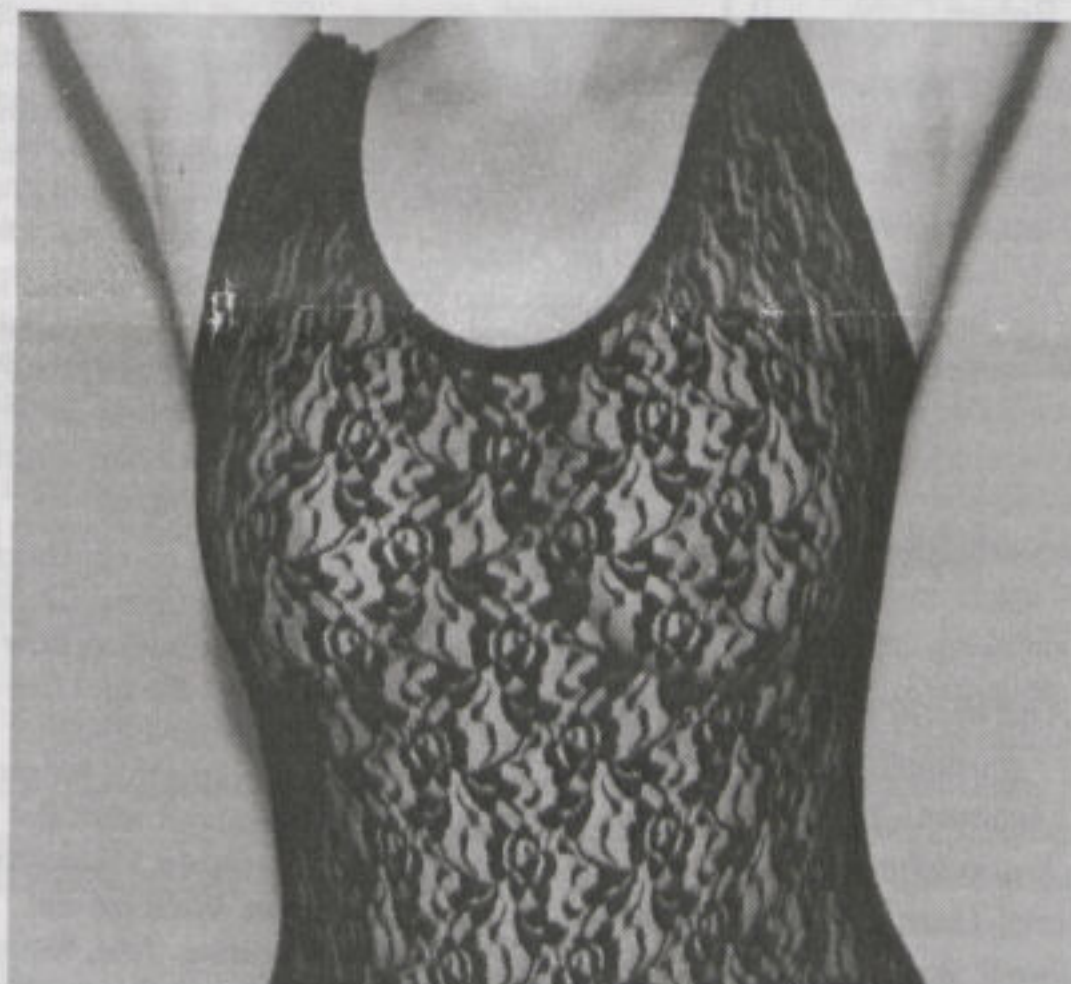


Photo by Natalie Rivkin

The Eyes Have It

By Annie Goglia

For me an important aspect of seduction is play: flirting, "making eyes," teasing, witty repartee, mock fighting, and generally being silly. I don't find there is a huge difference along gender lines — it really depends on the person and the situation. The more I think about it the less clear it becomes — it's a complex interaction influenced by so many factors. I can say that I've been the active seducer with some men and women, and the passive seductee with others.

One of my most memorable (mutual) seductions was on the dance floor. It was with a woman I had met just the day before. I was getting the message that she was interested by the way she looked at me — giving me "the eye." She had on a short and tight sexy dress. We moved from eye contact to body contact to kissing. I loved it — it was very sensual to move with each

Eyes continues on page 7

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Book Review: *Bi Lives*.....8

Video Review: *The Hunger*9

Calendar.....11,12

Volunteers of the Month

Ellen Cullen

Amy Wyeth

Gail

Robyn Ochs

Elle Thomas

Rosalie

Annie Goglia

Abby



*And many more
wonderful
women! You
know who you
are! Thank you,
thank you, thank
you!*

BiWomen is published bi-monthly.

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Ellyn Ruthstrom

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recycled paper

Looking Ahead to the Fall

There is an interesting array of articles in this issue prompted by our "Seduction" theme. And, thanks to photographer [redacted] we've also got some provocative photos to perk up the issue with. As an editor, I really appreciate it when someone offers me artwork, and I put that out to you readers to consider submitting photos or original artwork for our pages in the future. And, of course, writing on almost any topic of interest to bi women is *always* wanted.

Summer is a great time for activities and meeting people. Word is that the Cambridge Women's Center Bi Rap group has been hopping the last two months, almost bursting out of the rooms they give the group. (See calendar for topics for August.) The July BBWN movie brunch was also well attended. (See calendar for more movie brunches.) But it's usually a bad time to talk shop — like who wants to update the phone list, or who wants to run the newsletter stuffing? The fall, however, is a wonderful time to settle down a little and get organized.

Come to a brainstorming potluck on Thursday, September 9th at the Boston Living Center. One item on the agenda will be deciding how BBWN will mark the occasion of the first Celebrating Bisexuality Day, September 23. (See article on page 3.) We haven't done this for quite a while so if you've got ideas about what the organization could do in the future, I hope you'll come and brainstorm with us. We'll eat and socialize a bit, then start storming. And, seeing that it's a Thursday, those interested can retire to Club Cafe for drinks and scoping during their women's night. Hope to see you there!

Ellyn Ruthstrom



Ellyn and a friend at Boston Pride.

The Boston Bisexual Women's Network is a feminist, not-for-profit collective organization whose purpose is to bring women together for support and validation. It is meant to be a safe environment in which women of all sexual self-identities, class backgrounds, racial, ethnic and religious groups, ages, abilities and disabilities are welcome. Through the vehicles of discussion, support, education, outreach, political action and social groups related to bisexuality, we are committed to the goals of full acceptance as bisexuals within the gay and lesbian community, and to full acceptance of bisexuality and the liberation of all gay people within the larger society.

Next in Bi Women:

The *BiWomen* theme for October/
November is:

Out in the Workplace

What's it like to come out to your colleagues? To your boss? To those you supervise? Have you ever been outed in your job? Have you ever made a job choice because of your sexuality? Have you been discriminated against because of your sexuality or for being "too out?"

DEADLINE: September 7, 1999

Future Issues in 1999

December/January:

Rituals and Celebrations



Please Submit to *BiWomen*!

Send articles, calendar entries, letters, black-and-white art, news, and views to:

BiWomen

P.O. Box 400639

Cambridge, MA 02140

or via e-mail to eruthstr@mail.lesley.edu.

*If you do not want your name published,
please tell us.*

All articles and art appearing in
this newsletter are copyrighted
by the authors and artists.

BBWN Financial Statement, January 1 - June 30, 1999

Balance forward 1/1/99: \$3050.82

Expenses

Printing	1172.30
Postal fees & postage	259.20
Buttons purchased	2072.50
Event expenses	317.67
Supplies	180.00
Advertising	50.00
Misc. (gift for outgoing editor)	67.14
Total expenses	\$4118.81

Income

Dues	1440.00
Advertising	80.00
Merchandise	719.04
Bank Interest	12.95
Donations	60.00
Event income	475.00
Total income:	2786.99
Balance as of 6/30/99	\$1719.00

Treasurer's Comments: This spring a one-time opportunity arose to purchase 5000 buttons at what is essentially half of the normal wholesale price. After much thought, I decided to purchase this merchandise, despite its strong short-term negative impact on our bank balance because over time this outlay of \$1470.50 should yield approximately three times that amount for BBWN. I believe strongly in the value of symbols, and we have been selling buttons through the BRC web site (<http://www.biresource.org/www.biresource.org>), at Pride events, and I have been selling buttons for BBWN at almost all of my speaking engagements. I have made a personal commitment to make a \$1000 loan to BBWN over the next year should it become necessary, but if anyone would like to make a donation to BBWN to cover all or part of the cost of this expense, please consider doing so. Checks can be sent to BBWN or, if you wish your donation to be tax deductible, you may channel it through our parent organization, BRC (P.O. Box 400639, Cambridge, MA 02140). Be sure to put "For BBWN" in the comment line. ▼

Submitted by Robyn Ochs, BBWN Treasurer

Celebrate Bisexuality With Us!



Celebrating Bisexuality Day is coming up fast on September 23. Unfortunately, the summer is a difficult time to get a large group of people together to organize. BBWN will mark this occasion somehow, so let's put our heads together and come up with something fun! If you are on the BBWN chatline (see sidebar on page 5), put your idea out there. We will be having a brainstorming meeting on Thursday, September 9 at the Boston Living Center. We'll start with a potluck dinner at 6:00 p.m., then do some brainstorming, then head over to Club Cafe for their women's night. Come with lots of ideas!!!

Celebrating Bisexuality Day: September 23

By Wendy Curry

Since announcing the first ever Celebrating Bisexuality Day a couple months ago, the response has been overwhelming. It seems to have tapped into the needs of many people in many, many countries. When describing the day to a new person, four questions keep coming up: Where did this come from? Why Sep-

tember 23? Who's involved? and What sorts of activities are planned?

In response to these questions, I put together a CBD FAQ (aren't acronyms fun?)

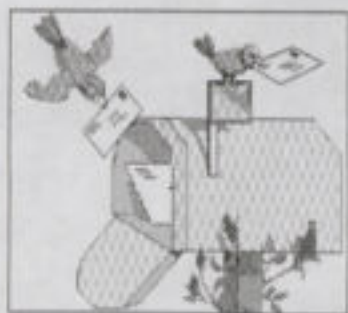
1) Where did this come from?

Gigi Raven Wilbur (bi DJ, Houston's "After Hours: Queer Radio," BiNet Houston organizer, BiNetUSA regional organizer) came up with the idea of CBD. He was responding to one of the problems in the activist arena — activists often work extremely hard on "issues," but in doing so, they forget to have fun, hang out with other bisexuals, and embrace what has been accomplished. Similarly, non-activists spend much of their time defending their right to be themselves, to be included in gay/lesbian space, to be judged as individuals.

No wonder there are so many closets, so much burn out! Gigi, queen of all that is happy and light, had just finished creating a vigil in Texas for three murdered transgendered women. He had been working his tail off. He created the impossible and it went beautifully,

Celebrating continues on page 10

To the Editor:



Hi there! I'm the webmaster for a roommate matching site that is owned and operated by queers, and is quite bi-friendly. It serves most major metro

areas in the U.S. and Canada. Most visitors say my site is amusing, comprehensive, and easy to use. Could I also modestly mention it recently won an Open Source Directory "Cool Site" award? I'd love a link on your site, if possible. It's located at: <http://www.roomiematch.com>. Thanks for reading this, and I hope to hear from you soon!

Robin Owsley

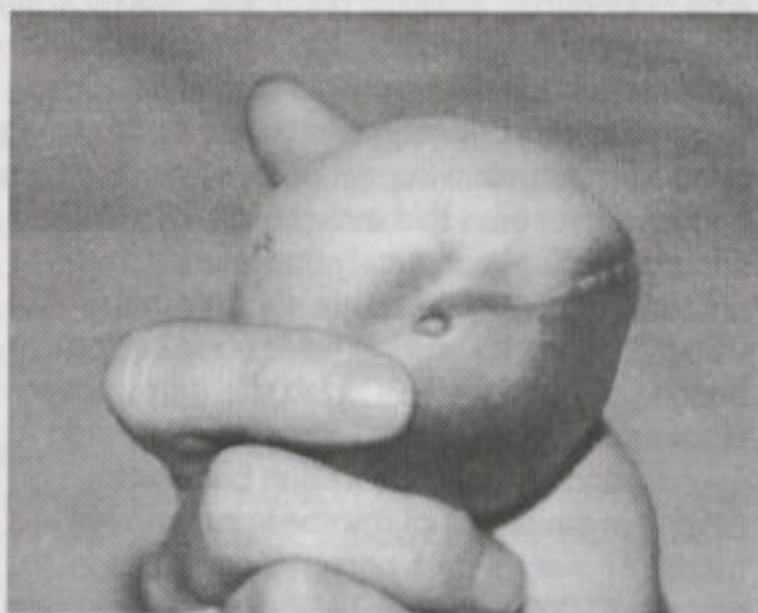
New Law Passed in Rhode Island

On June 30, Rhode Island became the first state to have a law that allows people the right to designate persons other than blood relatives to supervise their funeral arrangements and disposal of their remains after their death. The law applies to everyone, but it is an opportunity for same-sex partners to care for each other without interference from other family members who might try to keep the partner out of the process. Funeral directors will have a form available soon.

Kate Monteiro, president of the Rhode Island Alliance for Lesbian and Gay Civil Rights, commented, "We're pleased that it's law because it will make a difference to real people in real tragic situations. We hope that many people in the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community in Rhode Island will go ahead and make official designations for someone who cares about them to do this."

The Perfect Peach

By Elle Thomas



It's Saturday morning. I've driven to the farm stand in Lexington. Only the finest produce will serve for you tonight. Fresh basil, tomatoes, smoked mozzarella, artichokes, mesclun, portabella mushrooms — my cart is brimming with your favourites. Surveying my trove, I am awash with anticipation of preparing this meal for you. But my quest is not complete. I need the perfect peach. One cradled and caressed by summer's warmth and light. One worthy of your attention. One that can compete, as I do, with the work that you lose yourself in every night, every weekend. I adore your dedication, your passion. Sometimes, from the kitchen, I watch you — hunched and typing with total concentration, your lips parted, paper strewn about your feet — and I forget to breathe, so lost I become in your beauty. Tonight, you will confer that passion to your own body. My nose catches the bouquet of ripened strawberries, and I return to the present. There, on a table to the right, I spy my trophy.

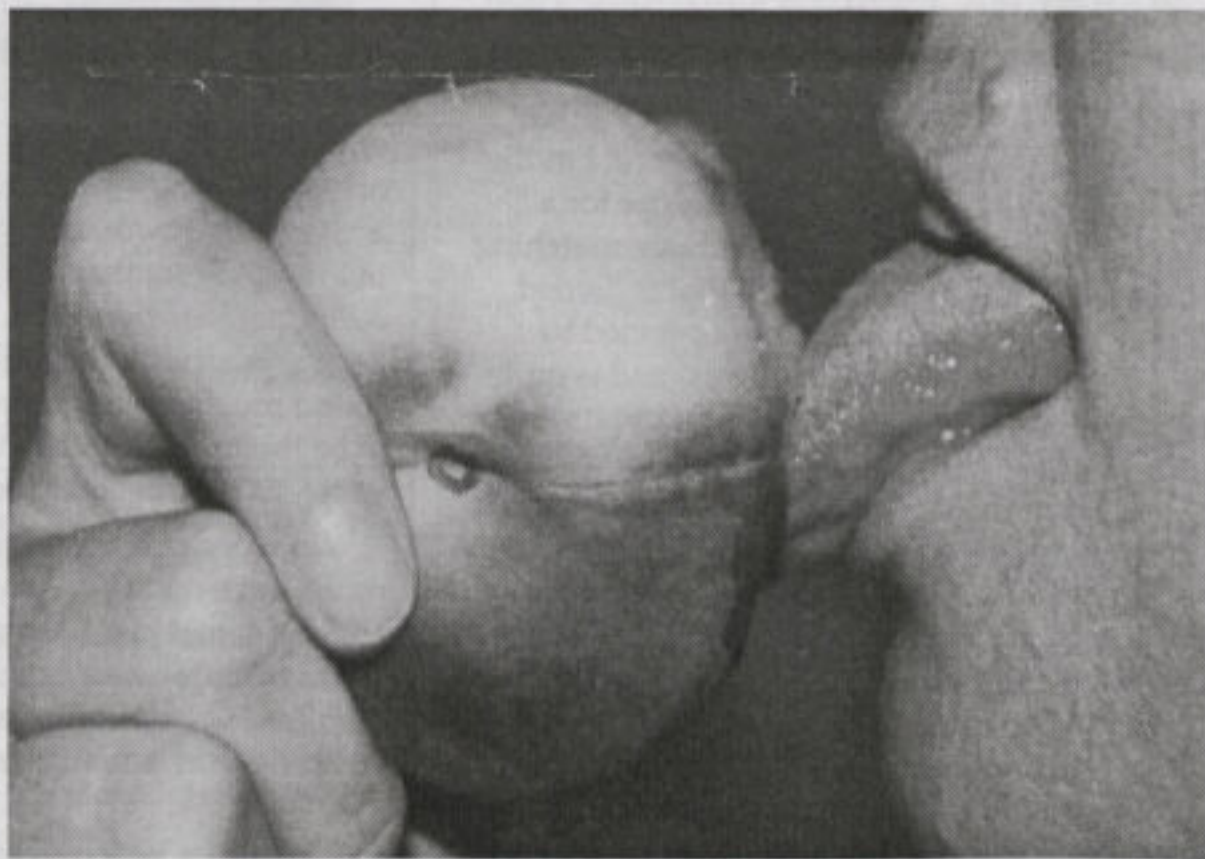
I arrive at your door, my bags heavy with treasure. After our sapid meal, I convince you to shower and rest on your bed, to give yourself permission to let go, to breathe, to feel peace. I wash the dishes, then join you in the deep blue twilight. A candelabra flickers soft light onto the walls. Silently I place a bowl of fruit on the nightstand. We lie naked, intertwine our legs, and soon, our mouths. I pluck from the bowl the perfect peach.

The flesh is softly giving to my touch,

the fuzz tickles slightly. I run this unbroken orb along your chin, your neck, your breast, your stomach. Gently, gently, you feel no weight, only the soft fur buffing your skin. I switch hands, so that this peach may rub against yours. A slight shiver as you are refreshed by its coolness. A breath of pleasure escapes your lips. I straddle you, your legs inside mine. I kiss your lips, keeping space between our breasts and bellies. I raise the peach to my mouth, and take the first nibble. You cannot hear my teeth break its surface, its ripeness is so perfect. But you feel the cool juice drip onto your navel. You raise your head to kiss me. You taste yourself, transferred to my mouth by the peach. Mmmmm. I only allow you one small taste. I nudge you back as I lick the sweet drippings from your middle.

I spread your lips apart. I lower the peach, its flesh now exposed, onto your warm clitoris. You rock, forward, back, forward, as I drench you with the peach. Your groans, gorgeous rhythms, come not from your throat but your soul, as I suck the peach's flesh, your own, the peach, until only the slippery pit remains. I savor your luscious juice as it cascades down my throat, letting not a drop reach the sheet.

I raise my body from below yours, sliding my own drenched vagina up from your navel, pausing to moisten your breast, until it is your nose that pushes me apart, your tongue that hungrily flicks my clit, your fingers that enter me, and you who release my floodgates. I press against your face, sigh deeply, and allow the only word that fills my brain — yes — to fill the room, as I clutch the sheet in my balled fist and thrust my thighs against your shoulders. ▽



Photos by Natalie Rivkin

Seduction by Poetry

Imagine...

By Jane Kaplan

Imagine you are an artist in your studio, and your only reason for being at that moment is to seduce the model who lies open before you, naked...

I love to draw I love to draw I love to draw I love to draw
 I love to draw I love to draw I love to draw
 Mmm I want to draw you naked with my tongue until you beg
 Don't Stop
 And I would never stop.
 I want to show you what I see
 And make you FEEL every beautiful thing that ever was,
 Running through your blood like poppy,
 Like a pillow for your head.
 Let me spell your senses with this artist razzle-dazzle touch
 And make you come, come into this Van Gogh night with me and burn in mad love.
 Let each passion-stroke shoot through you like that flame
 And free yourself, free yourself - it's
 your warm honey dripping dripping
 from my lips.
 Mmm, baby, let me do this all for
 YOU and I will surely melt like hot
 wax beside you.
 Then you can shape me any way you
 want, I am putty in your hands.
 I am lost without this fire-breathing
 all-consuming art
 I'M ON MY KNEES
 And I will find it in you, baby,
 Deep deep inside.

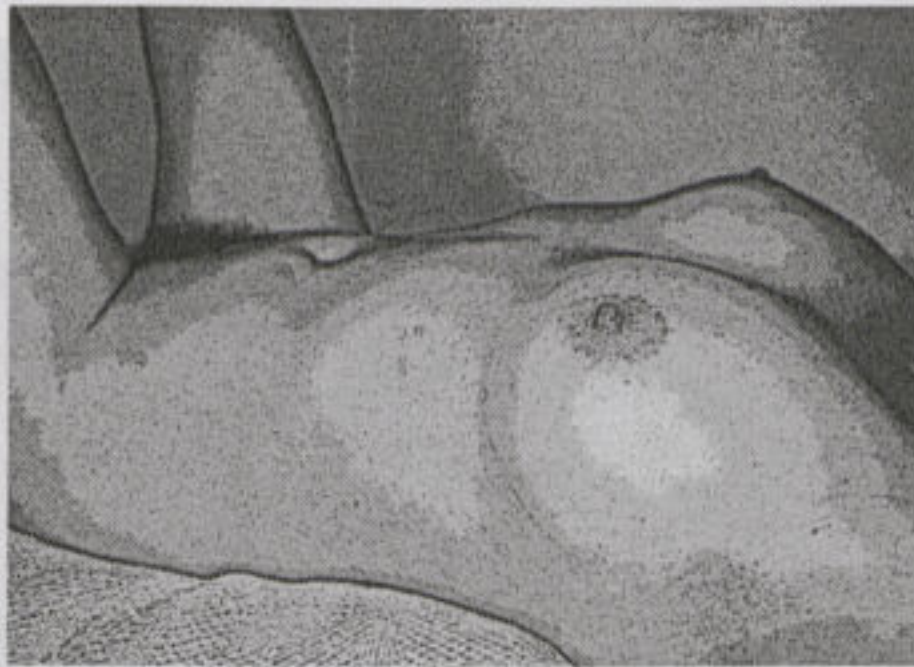


Photo by Natalie Rivkin

A Little Light

By Shannon Morse

When I looked at you
 and thought, I never knew
 I'd like to spend the whole night
 with someone who thinks like I do.
 And knows the put-offs of come-ons
 by men whose touch I never
 desired to feel.

When I looked at you
 and sensed something grew
 from that first hello over coffee steam
 and smoke stream.
 I'd like to see your face
 beneath me,
 reflection of desire true.

When I looked at you
 I felt something new.
 Not a shock or a weird sexual scene,
 a dream of you in the
 middle of the night,
 was more like opening up to let in
 a little light.



Come online with BBWN!

BBWN has three new online lists for you to participate on.

bbwn-events is a listing of events for or of interest to BBWN members and other bi and bi-friendly women in and around the Boston area.

bbwn-activist is a list for bi women in the Boston area who would like to help plan, shape, and implement events, programs, actions, and policies of BBWN.

bbwn-chat is a discussion list for BBWN members and other bi and bi-friendly women.

To subscribe to any of these new lists, send e-mail to: lastname-request@lists.home.welcomehome.org (replace lastname with name of list you are subscribing to) and include only the command "subscribe" (without the quotes) in the body of the message.

"Taking Care of Our Whole Community"

On August 26-28, the Gay and Lesbian Medical Association will hold their 17th Annual Symposium, "Taking Care of Our Whole Community," in San Diego, CA. GLMA is a membership organization of 2,000 LGBT physicians, medical students, and their supporters, and works to combat homophobia within the medical profession and in society, to promote healthcare for LGBT and HIV positive people, to foster a positive professional climate for members, and to support members challenged by discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. Registration fees range from \$150-675, depending on your affiliation within the profession. Contact: 415-255-4547, info@glma.org, or www.glma.org.

Sensual from page 1

evening that isn't a "school night." By the same token, let the pleasures you have in store unfold naturally. Show restraint and patience, don't overwhelm her with all of your surprises all at once.

Planning

Remember that spicy foods irritate mucus membranes (sniffing isn't very sexy). Keep in mind that the sense of smell is the strongest memory sense — don't trigger allergies or unpleasant flashbacks with that new scented shampoo. Be subtle and discover such things well in advance. Or be obvious and develop a shopping list together.

SOUND

Don't we all think about mood music? There are standard CDs and artists that are familiar and evocative. And if they work for you and your partner, great. Sometimes, though, familiar can backfire; perhaps Sade was an ex's favorite.



Photos by [REDACTED]

Having a few out-of-the-ordinary selections in your collection of a great idea. A variety of music is best, but the most important thing is to keep it running — put the music on repeat so you aren't jolted out of your mood.

Read to her/him! There are wonderful collections of erotica that can enhance the mood. Ask the sales staff at your local bookstore for recommendations, or write your own story.

Don't forget about blocking out external noise and creating privacy for yourself. If it's just too hot to close the windows, be creative — use that spare bedroom that faces the back yard, rent a hotel room, or borrow a friend's country apartment.

SIGHT

Mood lighting can be created by Christmas tree lights, lamps with dimmers, candles (watch fire hazard), mirrors (reflected candles are terrific). Experiment with a blindfold. Also consider changing your physical surroundings by swapping apartments with a friend or renting a hotel room.

TOUCH

Vary the sensations with feathers (full and soft or more pointed), fabrics (including silk, linen, leather), temperature (cold chrome vs. hot wax), and the intensity of your own body (fingers vs. whole forearm, gentle vs. firm). Consider sending her/him for a professional massage and picking her/him up from there, or find someone who will make a home visit.

SMELL

Once you know what smells to avoid, consider shaping a mood with your personal care products (soap, shampoo), scented candles, and incense. Don't forget to stow the dirty laundry elsewhere!

TASTE

Some people eat to live and find food fetishes much ado about nothing. I am not among them. The zeal I have for food, and its power to lead me to sensual bliss, is unparalleled. I could write a lengthy article solely on sensual food. In the interests of space, I will give

only a brief overview of some key considerations.

Exoticness

Foods outside one's daily diet hold more possibilities (a mango versus an orange).

Quality & Season

Fresh is infinitely more appealing than frozen. Forgo Stop 'n Shop and shrink wrapped tomatoes. Find a good market and keep in season.

Temperature

Warm weather should bring cold foods, and vice versa. July is not the month to charm your partner with hot apple pie.

Time of day

Save chocolate and champagne for evening. Try fruit and yogurt for morning trysts.

Complexity of preparation

Risotto is fabulous, but it requires at least 30 minutes of your undivided attention — sort of defeating the purpose, isn't it?

Complexity of palate

Use only one or two strong flavors and keep something neutral on hand to cleanse the palate (bananas are great for this).

Cleanliness

Some foods are just plain messy. Take into consideration staining and disposal. A few ideas...

Fruits: Mangos, peaches, grapes, papaya, berries, apples, pears, durian, passionfruit, kiwi, cherries, bananas.

Vegetables: Artichokes, squash, avocado, mashed potatoes, asparagus, carrots, tomatoes.

Liquids & condiments: Champagne, young-berry juice, olive oil, whipped cream, honey, maple syrup, Fresh Samantha's line of juices.

Main courses: Lobster, caviar, smoked salmon.

Bread: Any type you like, as long as it is FRESH! Homemade is the best, but we aren't all culinary experts, so a great local bakery will do just fine.



Exciting the mood

As all good things must end, so must your time together. Transitions "back to reality" should not be abrupt. A night's sleep together is a natural transition, but that isn't always possible. Other ideas — give a massage after your lovemaking, or go for a walk together. And, of course, tell her how special s/he is to you and how you enjoyed giving her/him a sensual experience. A built-in bonus to creating a sensual mood for your lover is that s/he will want to return the favor! ▼

The Survivor's Guide to Sex

Cleis Press and Hanarchy Now Productions will be sponsoring an event this fall to celebrate the publication of *The Survivor's Guide to Sex: How to Create Your Own Empowered Sexuality After Child Sexual Abuse*. Written by Staci Haines, the book is a sex-positive guide for women survivors of sexual assault and abuse. Call 617-983-8884 or check www.hanarchy.com for updates.

Survey Says?

Research participants needed. Doctoral student seeking women to complete a 43-item survey regarding well-being in women. BBWN has a few copies of the survey, contact Ellyn at 617-926-8737 if you would like one or Kristi at: kketz@umemphis.campuscwix.net or 901-682-6153 or 848 Thistledown Dr., Memphis, TN 38117.

Eyes from page 1

other's bodies and dance cheek-to-cheek. It was a fantasy from my teenage years come to life!

Some seductions take a long time! The start of one of my long-term relationships took place nine months after we first met. We originally met at a bi retreat, but for me the immediate chemistry wasn't there. After that we were both part of a discussion group that met regularly, and were slowly checking each other out. I gradually became more interested as I realized how much we had in common. He invited me to a play...I could feel the sexual tension while we sat side-by-side, not touching. We actually talked about starting a sexual relationship before we did anything. He told me he wanted to be "courted," so I sent him a fancy invitation for dinner by mail. He accepted. I picked him up at his apartment and drove us to the restaurant

where I had made reservations. We had a romantic dinner with wine and lots of talk which lead to a "make-out" session at his place, and eventually to a four and a half year relationship. You just never know... ▼

Michelle By Tamika

As I lean over
to kiss your lips
when connected its
like taking a sip
of the finest
of all wines
emotions is what ties
and which lies
between each kiss

Gender-Free Dance Camp

During the weekend of September 17-19, Laver Country and Folk Dancers will be sponsoring their 10th annual Gender-Free Dance Camp. Held in Becket, Massachusetts in the Berkshires, the camp offers contra dancing, English country dancing, international folk dancing, singing, and more. Costs: Before August 14: \$160 members, \$180 nonmembers; after August 14: \$170-190 or with work exchange, \$90/\$100. BBWN has a supply of registration forms, call Ellyn at 617-926-8737 to get one from her. Or deal direct: Jim La Bonte, 30 Middlesex Circle, Apt 11, Waltham, MA 02452, Attn: Dance Camp Registration.

Book Review



Bi Lives: Bisexual Women Tell Their Stories, See Sharp Press, 1999

Reviewed by Ellyn Ruthstrom

If you have read the bi classic, *Bi Any Other Name*, were you amazed (as I was) at the incredible diversity of experiences and ways of living a bisexual life? The new book, *Bi Lives: Bisexual Women Tell Their Stories*, is another opportunity to revel in our multiplicities yet again, this time with just bisexual women. Editor Kata Orndorff says in her introduction that she chose to do the book because of that tremendous variety and to show how real bi lives smash the stereotypes so often propagated about us.

Orndorff shares her own life history in the Preface and shares why it was such an important task for her to write the book. "Interviewing the women whose stories appear here, for whom coming to terms with their sexuality was often difficult, catalyzed my anger at the ways bisexuals are hurt by people who want to limit our options or punish us for being who we are. It finally enabled me to strongly and proudly ground myself in my identity as a bisexual woman. I am very grateful to the women I interviewed for this gift."

Orndorff begins most of the interviews asking women about their ethnic, class, and family background. This is a good thing to begin with but I wish she had returned to those aspects of the people's lives a bit more in later questions. Such as, "As a woman of color, (or as a working class woman) what has your experience been in the queer community?" It would have been nice to have some analysis of how our various identities intersect. She mentions in "A Note on the Women in This Book" that several women of color decided they did not want to be in the book after their interviews, so the collection is more representative of white women's experience. There is a good spread of ages — most of the women are in their thirties, forties, and fifties — and different classes and white ethnicities are represented.

Though the names of most of the women have been changed to protect their anonymity, the bi activist Lani Ka'ahumanu is identified, as is her daughter. Most of the women are not bi activists, though a few are, but rather just women living their lives and bisexuality is just part of their identity. When I first looked over the book it bothered me that all of the women

either lived in San Francisco or other parts of California (except for two in the "Northwest" and one in Arizona). After reading all the interviews, there still was a California cultural bias, but many of the women were from other parts of the country and talked about their experiences in other contexts besides California.

Each woman discusses her first awareness of sexual attraction to both men and women, and then gives a description of her relationship history. For the most part, Orndorff asks similar questions to each woman in relatively the same order, so you get used to the rhythm of the dialogues. She does, however, allow for the individuality of interviewees to spark different questions on unique territory when it warrants.

Other areas that the women talk about are what their ideal situation in terms of relationships would be, if they are a feminist and what that means to them, and if they see bisexuality as having political implications. Orndorff also has each woman comment about how it is for them dealing with straight people, lesbians, gay men, and other bisexuals as a bisexual woman. This is usually where the stories of biphobia come out, if they haven't already, but it is also where evidence of the change and acceptance by certain communities is apparent.

Orndorff puts a great deal of importance on the issue of safer sex throughout her interviews and at the end of the book with a section called "Safer Sex: How to Protect Yourself." Written by Rowan Frost, a health educator from Arizona, the guide discusses the risk factors for sexual practices and gives practical advice about testing and HIV resources.

To round off the book is "Resources for Bisexual Women," written by BBWN's Robyn Ochs. It's a condensed version of the much more thorough information available in the *Bisexual Resource Guide*.

I do have a criticism of the ugly cover of the book. Besides the olive green cover there is just a one inch thick black and white graphic of five women's faces. All of the women seem rather tight-lipped and some downright sad. Some of them are looking at each other, with very shifty eyes, but I'm not sure what sort of feeling there is supposed to be between them.

On the whole, *Bi Lives* is a good addition to the growing library of bi-related non fiction books. It gives an interesting view into bi women's lives and the intricacies of life in general.



Visit BBWN's web site!

<http://>

[davidr.ne.mediaone.net/
biresource/bbwn/](http://davidr.ne.mediaone.net/biresource/bbwn/)

Vermont and New Hampshire Queer Guide Announced

The Gay Info Line of NH is proud to announce the publication of, *Gay Lifeline '99*, a brand new, completely up-to-date directory for the sexual minority communities of Vermont and New Hampshire. This thoroughly researched and extremely handy volume details the social groups and meeting places where we

connect, plus professional services of interest. Gay AA meetings are covered, as are gay and lesbian B & Bs, plus New England GLBTQ publications and internet sites. Special sections for bisexuals, transgenders and GLBTQ youth are also included. *Gay Lifeline '99* contains a wealth of extremely hard-to-find info, sure to

be of interest to anyone connected to the queer community.

The cost is \$5 each, plus \$3 shipping and handling. Purchase twelve books for only \$50, and they will pay the shipping. Buy 24 or more books for only \$76 with postage included. Send payment to: Gay Info Line, 26 South Main St., Box 181, Concord, NH 03301. Email: Lifeline@quest-net.com. The Gay Info Line is a non-profit, all volunteer organization.



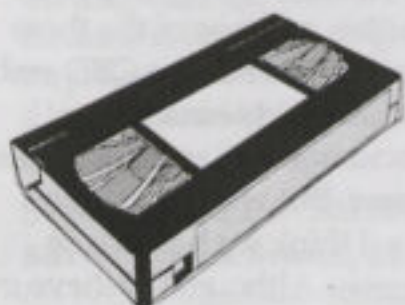
A recent BBWN brunch. Each month we have a brunch in a member's home. Would you like to have fabulous bi women come to your home? Contact Ellyn at 617-926-8737.

Michigan Women's Music Festival



There's still time to get tickets for the Michigan Women's Music Festival, August 10-15. Held on 650 acres of secluded forest and meadows, this weeklong festival consists of performances by women artists, 300 workshops, films and videos, a craft area, and more. For more information, see www.mich.fest.com, or write to: WWTMC, Box 22, Walhalla, MI 49458.

Video Review: *The Hunger*



Ever been seduced into seeing a movie? I had been told that Susan Sarandon was in a vampire movie called *The Hunger*. Vampires? Hmmm. I

had read Anne Rice's *Interview with a Vampire* and had videotaped the CBS original movie "Nick Knight" starring Rick Springfield (don't ask) but I really wasn't INTO the whole vampire thing. But I WAS really INTO Susan Sarandon (Dammit, Janet, I love yooooouuu). Then I was told Sarandon had done a hot, beautiful love scene with Catherine Deneuve in *The Hunger*. Later, a lesbian friend of mine said, "I wore out my copy of that flick. Heh, heh, heh." So, I was there!!

The movie begins with a very MTV feel to it, with Bau Haus lip-synching "Bela Lugosi's Dead" in a disco. Director Tony Scott presents a visually stunning, ethereal, noiresque and chic film. The underscore is piercing and haunting. For its day, the special effects and make-up are phenomenal. Tony Scott is the director of such eclectic films as *Top Gun* and *True Romance*; the

Reviewed by Abby Stevens

latter was written by Quentin Tarantino.

In *The Hunger*, Catherine Deneuve plays a lovely vampire named Miriam who never ages. David Bowie plays her 200-year-old vampire lover who looks thirty and then suddenly starts growing old very rapidly. Susan Sarandon plays a scientist/researcher specializing in the aging process.

The characters' worlds of Sarandon and Deneuve collide which result in lust, blood, and tears. It doesn't take much for Miriam to seduce the nipple-hard Sarandon. If you're the queasy type, close your eyes during the bloody scenes but hit the "slow" button on the VCR remote during the erotic stuff.



La Red

The Network

para Lesbianas y Mujeres
Bisexuales Maltratadas

for Battered Lesbians and
Bisexual Women

P.O. Box 6011; Boston, MA 02114
Office/Oficina: (V/TTY/Fax) 617.695.0877
Hotline/Línea de Crisis: (V/TTY) 617.423.SAFE
e-mail/correo electrónico: nblbw@erols.com

Swim for Life

The 12th Annual Provincetown Harbor Swim for Life is being held Saturday, September 11 to again benefit Provincetown AIDS organizations. It is a 1.4 mile open water swim. Last year 210 swimmers participated and raised over \$90,000. Contact: Swim for Life, P.O. Box 819, Provincetown, MA 02657, or rerooot@tiac.net, or www.ptownlib.com/swim.html

Celebrating from page 3

but he had been fought all the way. This may be why the celebration was so obvious to him.

When Gigi proposed this to the BiNet Leader's list, Michael Page (BiCafe founder, creator of the Bi Pride Flag, and BiNet USA local organizer) and I (Wendy Curry, BiNet USA National Coordinator) were instantly interested. We immediately started planning. Since we wanted an international, all inclusive celebration, we opted to separate the day from BiNet. If the day was to be a success, it couldn't be dominated by any one group, regardless of it's effectiveness.

2) Why September 23?

Actually, the deciding question was "why not?" We polled several groups, bi leaders, and group members, asking the question, "What day or event would make the 'best' day to celebrate all bisexuals?" We had several responses. Freddie Mercury's birthday, Margaret Mead's

birthday, the anniversary of the Rocky Horror Picture Show's opening, David Lauree's birthday, etc. But, as you know, bisexuals are a diverse group. There was no ONE person or event that everyone was willing to live with; no ONE day spoke to the entire international community. Rather than isolate a part of our community with our selection, we chose to pick a random day.


Our "random" day had several constraints: universities had to be in session (but not near the end of a semester); there could be no pre-existing holiday; it couldn't be too close to an existing gay holiday (we didn't want to be accused of "tagging on" to an existing gay day); it couldn't be in the middle of the summer or winter (too cold for outdoor activities in either the northern or southern hemispheres). We eventually settled on September 23.

3) Who's involved?

As a grass roots celebration (although the original proponents were all BiNet USA organizers, we came to the CBD discussion as individuals and local activists), we are not sponsor driven. However, groups including BiNet USA, Bi Resource Center, *Anything that Moves*, Bi Cafe, Australia BiNet, Boston Bisexual Women's Network, BECAUSE (MN), have either donated to the informational packet (still in development) or acknowledged us, or organized local events, or helped advertise the day. Unlike Pride celebrations, there currently aren't corporate sponsors.

My personal involvement: Well, I'm part of the originating committee, and one of the three main volunteers. I created and run the CBD web site (<http://home.earthlink.net/~madamec/>), help moderate the discussion list, and sent out a half zillion press releases. But why? The idea spoke to me, of course. I think it's because of where my activist focus is. Although I believe in lobbying Congress and creating allies with national gay/lesbian groups, my heart is in local community building. Maybe it's because I was out for nearly a decade before I met another bisexual, but I have this drive for creating a place where all bisexuals feel at home, where they can be themselves, and get filled with such a sense of acceptance and community, that they can deal with all the daily crap. True, I'm a pack animal, but there's something about facing biphobia with a sense that you're a part of something bigger, something to be proud of.

4) What are people doing?

So far, there are picnics, dances, potlucks, safer sex parties, movie nights, bi night at a local gay bar, bi group open houses, some talk of pride-like parades, come out at work days, and many more! 

BETH DAMSKY, MSW, LICSW

Psychotherapy and Consultation

50 Dudley Street
Cambridge, MA 02140
617.497.6581

Show your VISIBILITY with buttons!

Two roads
diverged in a
yellow wood...
and I took both

HATE IS
NOT
A FAMILY
VALUE

Other designs include:

- If God had meant for people to be bisexual there would be two sexes
- I'm bisexual and I'm NOT attracted to you
- Racism, sexism, homophobia — Recognize the Connections
- Bisexual Pride
- VISIBILITY

Please send \$2.00 per button (includes postage) to:
BBWN, P.O. Box 400639, Cambridge, MA 02140

CALENDAR *continued from page 12*

September 1 ♦ Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual. 7-9 p.m. See August 4th.

September 7 ♦ Tuesday

Bi Rap at the Women's Center, 7:30-9:00 p.m. Call 617-354-8807 for topic. See August 3rd.

BiWomen Submissions Deadline. This issue's theme is "Out in the Workplace." Send articles (on any topic), calendar entries, letters, art, news, and views to: *BiWomen*, P.O. Box 400639, Cambridge, MA 02140 or e-mail to eruthstr@mail.lesley.edu.

September 8 ♦ Wednesday

Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting, 7-9 p.m. See August 11th.

BBWN Introductory Meeting, 7:30-9:00. A safe space for women to connect with the bisexual community. Cambridge Women's Center, 26 Pleasant St., Cambridge, 617-354-8807.



Thanks for reading
BiWomen.

Do you subscribe?

How about a little
commitment?

September 9 ♦ Thursday

BBWN Brainstorming Meeting and Potluck, 6-9 p.m. Bring a dish to share and catch up with others after the long summer. Then we will brainstorm ideas for future activities (including Celebrating Bisexuality Day) and see where the organization wants to go. The more the merrier! Call Ellyn at 617-926-8737 for more information.

September 11 ♦ Saturday

BBWN Potluck Brunch, 11:00 a.m. Please join us as the home of Ananda and Amy in Somerville, a place for very special bi gatherings. Bring a dish to share, relax and meet new people or see old friends. Call 776-1008 for directions.

September 12 ♦ Sunday

Biversity Trip to America's Stonehenge, 1:00 p.m. Tour a series of stone walls and 4-11 ton capstones built 4000 years ago to form an astronomically aligned calendar. Come explore the mystery surrounding one of the most important archeological sites in the western hemisphere just over the state border in North Salem, NH. (Read about the site at www.stonehengeusa.com.) From I93, get off at exit 3. Take Rt. 111 East approx. 5 miles to Haverhill Rd. Follow Haverhill Rd. south to entrance. If you need a ride, please call biversity at 617-424-9595 or email us at biversity@biresource.org. Meet at 1 p.m. in the parking lot. Prices are \$7.95 for adults, \$5.95 for seniors (62+) and ages 13-18, and \$3.95 for ages 6-12.

September 15 ♦ Tuesday

Bi Space, 7-9 p.m. See August 18th.

September 17 ♦ Friday

Biversity Gathering, 7:30 p.m. Start the weekend off right with other Biversity folks at the Diesel Cafe, Davis Square's hot new lesbian owned java joint. You can play pool, enjoy delicious coffee drinks and great company. 257 Elm Street, Somerville.

September 18 ♦ Saturday

Biversity Brunch at Johnny D's in Davis Square in Somerville, 11:30 a.m. Right across the street from the Davis Square T stop.

Biversity Planning Meeting. The bi-monthly planning meeting will follow immediately after the brunch at Johnny D's, so please bring your great ideas for upcoming calendar events!

September 23 ♦ Thursday

Celebrating Bisexuality Day! Do you know what is going on in your area? Check out the web site <http://home.earthlink.net/~madamec/> for the most up-to-date information.

September 25 ♦ Saturday

Biversity Dinner, 7:30 p.m. Show off your culinary skills (or not) and welcome the coming of fall at Arthur's potluck dinner in Newton. Please bring food or beverages to share. For directions contact Arthur at 617-527-1442 or arthurc@mediaone.net.

September 26 ♦ Sunday

Biversity Brunch, 1:00 p.m. Enjoy Malaysian food at Tigerlily, 8 Westland Ave. in Boston. 617-267-8881.

September 27 ♦ Monday

Bisexual People of Color Potluck Dinner, 7-9 p.m. Boston Living Center, 29 Stanhope St. See August 23rd.

September 28 ♦ Tuesday

BBWN Pre-mailing Dinner, 6 p.m. at Bertucci's on Stanhope St., just two doors down from the Bi Office.

BiWomen mailing, 7-9 p.m. at the Bi Office. Label, stuff, and lick. Actually the licking is *after* the mailing. Ha! Join us.

Biversity Boston is the mixed gender bisexual Network of Greater Boston.

Ongoing Events

4th Mondays: NEW DAY AND TIME – Bi People of Color Potluck, 7-9 p.m. at the Boston Living Center, 29 Stanhope St. For info call 617-424-9595.

1st & 3rd Thursdays:

Bi Women's Resource & Support Group. 7 p.m. at the Women's Health Consortium, 379 State St., Portsmouth, NH. For info call 603-431-1669 or contact Sue Corcoran at schmoo@nh.ultranet.com.

Women's Club Nights

Saturdays: Lava Bar in Kenmore Square, 575 Commonwealth Ave. at the Howard Johnson's.



SUBSCRIPTION RATE for BiWomen (sliding scale)

- ___ \$0-\$20 (pay what you can)
- ___ \$20-\$30 (suggested)
- ___ \$30-\$100

_____ New Subscriber

_____ Renewal

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE (Optional) _____

BBWN, P.O. BOX 400639, Cambridge, MA 02140

The "Bi Office"

is the Bisexual Resource Center, located at 29 Stanhope Street, behind Club Cafe, right next door to Bertucci's and just down the street from the Hard Rock Cafe. For info call 617-424-9595.

Ongoing Events

1st & 3rd Tuesdays:

Bi Women's Rap. 7:30 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St, Cambridge. For info and discussion topics call 617-354-8807.

Wednesdays:

Gendertalk. 8:30-9:30 p.m. on WMBR 88.1 FM. Deals with transgender and queer issues.

2nd Thursdays: Single Jewish Lesbian and Bisexual Women's Group. 6:30-8 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant Street. Info: 617-499-9612

Bi Married Women's Support Group. 7-9 p.m. at the Bi Office. For bi women who are married to or in a relationship with a man. Call Debbie at 617-782-2754 for info.

3rd Thursdays: SpeakOut Meeting. 8 p.m., at the Boston Living Center, 29-33 Stanhope St., Boston. Wheelchair accessible. General meeting at 6:45 p.m., theme program starts at 8 p.m. Info: 617-354-0133.

CALENDAR

August 3 ♦ Tuesday

Bi Rap at the Women's Center, 7:30-9:00. Topic: "Subtle Discrimination and Responses to It." Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., 617-354-8807.

August 4 ♦ Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m. An informal support group for people who think they may be bisexual or attracted to more than one sex. A small donation is requested to help pay for the space. The group meets at the Bisexual Resource Center at 29 Stanhope St. in Boston. Call 617-424-9595 for info.

August 11 ♦ Wednesday

Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting, 7-9 p.m. The BRC board meets monthly to work on educational programs, the bi office, the web site, the international bi organizing, fund raising, etc. All bi community members welcome to attend. The meeting is at 29 Stanhope St. in Back Bay.

August 14 ♦ Saturday

BBWN Matinee/Brunch. Time TBA. Meet for a movie and go for food afterwards. Call Ellyn at 617-926-8737 for details before August 12th. We'll pick a movie that's playing at the time, preferably something queer.

Games Night co-hosted by Linda and Maura's at Maura's in Arlington, 7:00 p.m. As much fun as Linda's previous games nights but in a new location. Bring games (board games, cards, etc.) and a snack or beverage to share and help to revive old fashioned fun for the new millennium. Call or email for directions at 781-648-7801 or lindab@shore.net.

BBWN Outing at Lava Bar,

10 p.m. Meet at the hottest women's night in Boston. It's got good music, gorgeous bartenders (who occasionally dance on the bar), a great light show, and comfy booths to settle into with the right person (or even that deliciously wrong person). 575 Commonwealth Ave. in Kenmore Square at the Howard Johnson's.

Separate entrance to the right of the hotel entrance. Call Ellyn at 617-926-8737 for details.

August 17 ♦ Tuesday

Coming Out as Bisexual. 7-9 p.m. See August 4th.

Bi Rap at the Women's Center, 7:30-9:00. Topic: "Coming Out Issues." See August 3rd.

August 18 ♦ Wednesday

Biversity mid-week break at the Diesel Cafe, Davis Square's hot new lesbian owned java joint. 7:30 p.m. You can play pool or just soak up the relaxing atmosphere with friends. 257 Elm Street, Somerville.

Bi Space, 7-9 p.m. A friendly discussion space to meet other bisexuals and talk about bisexual issues. A topic is used to focus discussion for the first hour. A \$2 donation is requested to help pay for the space. BiSpace is held at the BRC at 29 Stanhope St. in Boston.

August 21 ♦ Saturday

BAFFLED: Bisexual Arts, Film Festival, Literature, Entertainment & Drama, 9 a.m. - 6:30 p.m. An anti-conference held at The Village Gay & Lesbian Center, 1125 N. McCadden Place at Santa Monica Blvd. in Los Angeles. World-renowned bisexuals will be leading workshops on various topics and a special presentation will be made to former "News Radio" star Andy Dick for being "an out creative bisexual." \$25 advance registration. For more info see: www.BiNetLA.org/baffled or call 323-882-4402.

August 21 ♦ Saturday

Brunch at Hazel's Country Kitchen on Dartmouth Street in Boston's Back Bay, 11:30 a.m. Hazel's has a whole new menu now and, weather permitting, we can dine outdoors. After brunch, those who'd like to join us will car pool down to the Randolph Country Club for swimming and frolicking by the pool.

August 23 ♦ Monday

Bisexual People of Color Potluck Dinner, 7-9 p.m. *Please Note the New Day and Time!* Join other bisexual people of color for a potluck dinner and discussion group. A small donation is requested to help pay for the space. The group meets in the library at the Boston Living Center at 29 Stanhope St. in Boston. Dial 1 to be buzzed in. For more information, call 617-424-9595 and leave a message for Ananda or Maria Christina.

August 28 ♦ Saturday

Biversity Naturist Swimming Trip at The Ledges. Let's not let the summer end without one more trip to this beautiful naturist swimming spot in Vermont. Meet at the Bi Office at 29 Stanhope St. in Boston's Back Bay (right next to Bertucci's) at 9 a.m. to carpool. If you need or can offer a ride, please help us to coordinate rides by letting biversity know in advance, either by calling us at 617-424-9595 or writing to us at biversity@biresource.org.

August 29 ♦ Sunday

Biversity Brunch, 1:00 p.m. Dine out on the patio at Skipjack's on Rt. 9 in Brookline Village, Brookline.

August 31 ♦ Tuesday

Bi Rap at the Women's Center, 7:30-9:00. Topic: "Monogamy and Polygamy." Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., 617-354-8807.

CALENDAR continues on page 11

OUT in the Workplace



Our World: How We Work It

Compiled by [REDACTED]

Being human we are social creatures, requiring contact with others. Emotionally and physically. And like most of our heterosexual kinfolk, we, as bisexual women, engage in common social activities. Included in these activities is work. A large part of our daily life is spent working. It is where much of who we are is expressed. However, unlike our counterparts, we have to deal with homophobia and biphobia in society, and more specifically, in the workplace. Coming out at work can be a very difficult, and often dangerous, task. Not only do we face potential isolation but physical harm as well, thus our hesitation, and often refusal, to be "out" with others at work.

The following questions were asked of several bi women in the Boston bisexual community:

1. What is your occupation?
2. Are you out at work?
3. If so, why? If no, why not?
4. What are your feelings about others being out at work?

Here are a few responses from bi women in a variety of work situations and in varied degrees of "being out."

I work at a supportive housing program for adults who are HIV+ and/or have a mental illness or substance abuse problem. I am the Clinical Coordinator and I provide group/individual therapy, case management and staff supervision. I am out to one person that I work with. I shared this information with her because I trust her; we are friends and we share personal information with each other. Two new employees have started; if I develop that type of relationship with them then I will tell them. I have no problem with people coming out at work, what-

Work continues on page 4



I'm out every day, are you?

Poetry

By Jane Kaplan

Work sucks, right?
For most of us
So why not make it what you make of it,
Yeah, why not take a chance?
Fuck it, this is who I am
THIS IS WHO I AM
Sorry if I disappoint
Or is that disgust?
Maybe, you can talk it over with my parents
Maybe, my therapist could give you a referral
Maybe, you'd like my **LAWYER'S BUSINESS CARD?**
Then again, maybe you're just copacetic
Yeah, I'd like that
'Cause then, maybe, we'd get something
DONE around here
And that's the point,
Right?

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

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Calendar.....	11,12

Volunteers of the Month

Gail
Robyn Ochs
Elle Thomas

Tamika
Paula
Jane
Keiko
Kara
Christie
Amy Wyeth



*And many more
wonderful
women! You
know who you
are! Thank you,
thank you, thank
you!*

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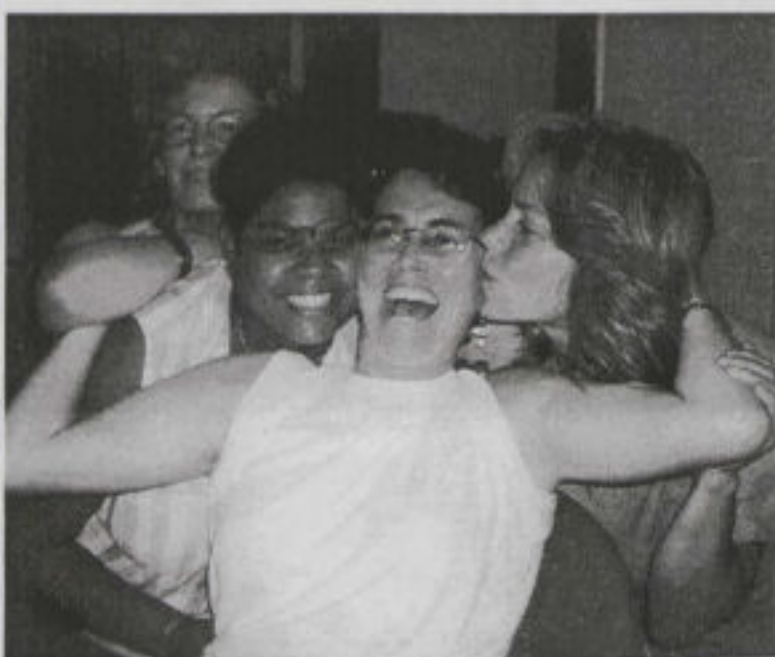
The Boston Bisexual Women's Network is a feminist, not-for-profit collective organization whose purpose is to bring women together for support and validation. It is meant to be a safe environment in which women of all sexual self-identities, class backgrounds, racial, ethnic and religious groups, ages, abilities and disabilities are welcome. Through the vehicles of discussion, support, education, outreach, political action and social groups related to bisexuality, we are committed to the goals of full acceptance as bisexuals within the gay and lesbian community, and to full acceptance of bisexuality and the liberation of all gay people within the larger society.

Staying Late at the Office

So here I am at my office finishing up this issue on being out in the workplace. Since I have been editing the newsletter on my own, I use my office computer to do all the production work on it. Which means during production week it feels like I am doing twelve hour days for my job. But from here I can see my rainbow window ornament and my Greg Greenway quote, "Love exists in as many ways as there are angles of the sun on the ocean," and my pictures of my family and friends and it feels very comfortable.

I feel lucky to work at a place where there are some very visible and out queer women and men who work in important positions of my organization. It has always felt like a safe environment to me to be out as bi. The strategy that I use for being out at my workplace is that when I come out to someone new I tell them that they can tell other people about me, too. I tell them that it is just too much work to go person to person and that the grapevine works better. And I explain to them that being bisexual is not something I am ashamed of so that it is an attribute that should be told to others in the same way one would say that I live in Somerville or that I have two siblings. And if someone doesn't like the fact that I'm bi then they can stay away from me without me having to deal with them. Fine by me.

Ellyn Ruthstrom



Ellyn being "appreciated" by Elle, Natalie, and Robyn at the September BBWN meeting.

Next in *Bi Women*:

The *BiWomen* theme for
December/January is:

Rituals and Celebrations

What makes a ritual queer? Have you shaped a traditional ritual (birthday, wedding, graduation, etc.) into something very different and very special as a bi woman? Are rituals important to you? Why? What do you like to celebrate and how do you like to do that? Share your favorite celebrations with us.

DEADLINE: November 16, 1999

Future Issues in 2000

February/March:

Bi Women Write About Men

April/May:

Femme/Butch



Please Submit to *BiWomen*!

Send articles, calendar entries, letters,
black-and-white art, news, and views to:

BiWomen

P.O. Box 400639

Cambridge, MA 02140

or via e-mail to eruthstr@mail.lesley.edu.

*If you do not want your name published,
please tell us.*

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BBWN Brainstorms New Ideas For Group

By Ellyn Ruthstrom

After a long break from organizational meetings, BBWN called a brainstorming meeting together on September 9th to get some ideas going for Celebrate Bisexuality Day (CBD), newsletter topics, and to reenergize the Diva List. A group of seven members gathered at the Living Center and got some imaginative ideas flowing.

The group happily decided not to plan other events for CBD, but rather to encourage all of our members to attend the BRC event at Club Cafe. There were some ideas about doing things at that event and Ellyn said she would check with Wayne to find out how much of the event was already planned and if BBWN could suggest anything. BBWN will definitely sell buttons at the event and there was a suggestion to do a board with a question on it that people could respond to in their own time.

Next on the agenda was the Cambridge Women's Center's anti-trans policy. Ellyn said that someone had called her to say that because BBWN holds their Introductory Meeting at the Women's Center they should know that there is an anti-trans policy. BBWN has an inclusive policy so this would conflict with the philosophy of the group. Robyn agreed to draft a letter to the Women's Center to first get an official explanation of their policy and then the group can discuss this further and respond appropriately.

The group then brainstormed topics for the next year of newsletters. This was a fun and thoughtful sharing process and we ended up with the following topics for next year:

February/March - Bi Women Write About Men

April/May - Femme/Butch

June/July - Bi Space/Goals of the Bi Movement/GLBT politics

August/September - Body Image

October/November - Bicultural/Biracial/Bisexual

December/January - Bi Youth

Brainstorming continues on page 9



The September brunch at Ananda and Amy's was a great success. If you are interested in hosting a brunch call Amy at 617-776-1008.

We Want You Badly!

BBWN is always looking for a few good women — no, we are usually pretty greedy and want as many as possible. Are you interested in volunteering for BBWN in some way? Would you like to write or find new advertisers for the newsletter? Would you like to help do the newsletter mailing every other month? Are you interested in planning activities for the organization? There are lots of opportunities to get involved with BBWN. If you are interested, try to come to the next Brainstorming Meeting on Thursday, November 4th at the Boston Living Center in downtown Boston. Call Ellyn at 617-623-5535 for directions or information about the meeting.

Third Annual Bisexual Activism Award Announced

The International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA) held its nineteenth World Conference for the first time on the African Continent, in Johannesburg, South Africa in September 1999. Lesbian, transgender, bisexual, and gay activists from around the world gathered for a week of plenaries, workshops, parties, cultural and sporting events, and to again present the International Renildo Jose dos Santos Memorial Award for Bisexual Activism.

This year's award was presented to Lani Ka'ahumanu and Dr. Suman Lahiry on September 23rd to coincide with International Celebrate Bisexuality Day. Ka'ahumanu is a long time bi activist and educator from the United States and Dr. Suman Lahiry is a bi/gay men's educator and support worker from Bangladesh.

Wayne Roberts, national coordinator of the Australian Bisexual Network, the organization that sponsors this annual award, and Alejandra Sarda, ILGA Women's Secretary from Argentina and recipient of the award in 1998, presented the award. "Both Lani and Suman deserve the accolades of the bisexual, lesbian, gay, and transgender communities for their work in an often hostile and fundamentalist environment," said Roberts.

The award honors the memory of Brazilian gay/bi activist, Renildo Jose dos Santos who was assassinated in 1993. The first year of the award honored Robyn Ochs of the Bisexual Resource Center and Boston Bisexual Women's Network in 1997. ▽

Mixed Race Queer Anthology

Blood/Lust: A Mixed Queer Anthology, seeks essays, poetry, and art that reflect the lived experiences of racially mixed trans, bi, lesbian, gay, two-spirit, hijra, bakla, patlatche, mahu or otherwise "queer" identified people. The editor seeks writings by people of all racial mixes, social backgrounds, abilities, and beliefs to speak about the complexities of being mixed and queer. Subject matter may include anything related to our lives, stories, and identities as mixed queer people.

Submissions must be double-spaced. Include your name and address on each page, a cover letter as well as a brief bio and a SASE. Deadline: November 19, 1999. Length: Poems, up to five; Essays, up to 8000 words; Art (do not send originals), up to five pieces. Send to: Blood/Lust c/o Qwo-Li Driskill, 1122 East Pike St., PMB # 470, Seattle, WA, 98122-3934. Queries may be e-mailed to mixedqueer@hotmail.com. Submissions by postal mail only. Manuscripts with pseudonyms will be considered.

Work from page 1

ever they are comfortable with. I have always worked with a diverse group of folks.

I am an office techie for an environmental consulting firm. I am not officially out at work, although a few co-workers that are friends know. It's a small company with a lot of gossip, which doesn't really bother me, but my identity here is as a straight woman and the transition is too difficult. Also, I work for my ex-mother-in-law. I don't want my sexuality to be in any way part of her thoughts of me as an employee or the reason why I left her son. On a more positive note....I would be out automatically in my next job. I don't have any negative feelings or hang-ups about my sexuality, so it won't bother me if others know. So I am not against being out, I would prefer to be out.

—Elle

I am a lawyer at a large corporate law firm. I don't think that it would be acceptable for me to be out at work as a bi because I am married, although I know gay people who are out at my firm. I think it is great that people can be out at work, but, for me, I do not believe that it is the right time or place and I feel it would jeopardize my career.

I do marketing and development at several theatrical organizations. Yes, I am out. It's the theatre. It's harder to be straight than queer anyway. Everyone is very open and accepting. I'm lucky in a way that most people are not. I would never blame anyone for not feeling comfortable being out at work...or anywhere. I am, in general, very open about my life at work and elsewhere. In many workplaces, sexual self-definition just really doesn't come in to play. I feel sorry that anyone actively involved would have to hide their significant other from co-workers.

I am a computer programmer and database administrator at a conservative mutual fund company. Yes, I always have been out at every place of employment. It might take a while before it becomes relevant to come out, but I always do to everyone I encounter regularly. I just wouldn't think to do otherwise, that would be to hide ME and I'm just not the kind of person to

hide anymore. I was in a relationship with a woman right after college, and then we got "married" (coworkers were invited) and had kids together, now divorced. People at work just ask about each others' personal lives, how could I possibly ever have talked about my life without including any or all of it? For all I know, my career has suffered for this honesty, but I doubt it. I believe that any career setbacks are far more likely to be due to my brash and radical attitudes. ("Capitalism is evil" - so what the hell am I doing in financial services???) Most people have at the very least contained their shock very politely. Except for weirdos on the street, I haven't had any problems coming out since I got kicked out of an apartment back in 1990. I have generally

been quite impressed by the human population out there. Of course, I tend to put out a very strong sense of self, a strong attitude of like it or fuck it, which may make people less likely to act on negative impulses. Perhaps.

Let's just ALL be out and get all the guesswork over with, not just about being gay, bi, whatever, but who's the

closet smoker shoplifter cross dresser mama's boy daddy's girl kid hater dog lover Saturday morning cartoon buff Star Trek Klingon-fighter-model-builder obscene poetry writer Martha Stewart clone. Everyone is just too interesting to keep showing these flat one-sided facets at work. For pity's sake, we spend more time at work than anywhere else, let's make it INTERESTING, let's make it challenging, we don't have to LIKE each other just be prepared to have your mind expand. Y'know?

—Jane

I'm an administrative secretary at a health center. No, I'm not out. A person should come "out" when the time is right. That time hasn't arrived for me yet. I work with five people in my department. I know in my heart three of them (two being my direct bosses) would be cool about it. The other two aren't what you'd call liberal, though I'd like to think they are not judgmental. Again, the timing should be right for both the person coming out and the fellow employees. Why make yourself and others uncomfortable unnecessarily? Pride is healthy, but the timing of coming out is important.

I haven't been able to attend the Pride Day parade the past couple years because of family

Statewide protections against workplace discrimination exist in only 10 states; in the rest of the country, employees fired for being gay have no legal recourse unless they work in a locality with its own anti-discrimination ordinance. The states that have laws including protection for sexual orientation are: California, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Wisconsin.

-- from GLAAD web site

obligations. If people want to come out and don't know how I think a good way is when on the Monday after the parade, if someone asks you about your weekend, tell them about attending the parade and who you marched with and who you supported and then that may be a good way to ease into coming out. The week of the first annual Celebrate Bisexuality Day on September 23 might be a good time to come out in the workplace, too.

I do administrative work for a university and direct a dance group. I am out to selected individuals, people that I am relatively close to and when it comes up I tell them. With many people it has not come up yet. I think it is really great for everyone to be able to be open.

I do domestic violence work. I'm out. I'm accepted at work as bi. It's important that I be out, as my work is political. It furthers our political purposes to be out (and about!); clients know they'll be respected and safe, that diversity is practiced and welcomed. People I train get to see living, breathing freedom of identity.

I have always been out in every job I've held since I graduated from undergrad. I also had a job where it was my profession to be out — director of the LGB center (they didn't allow the T). I have a lot to say about that time. I had no control over who knew or didn't know that I was out. It was on my paycheck stub, bank loans I applied for, people I sat next to on planes who asked what I did, etc. Every person who held that job before me had death threats and hate crimes and it was no different for me. I had people try to kill me, and sent bomb threats to every event I organized. I had to step over police "Do Not Cross: Bomb Threat" tapes to get to my office

way too many times. Because of that and a few other awful events, I ended up being diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Which is one of my health problems now. I have the usual standard reasons for being out. I think every time we come out or stick up for human rights it makes life better for future generations. And I definitely want people to have it better than I have had.

—Christie

I work in IT, and at my last few jobs I have not been out at work. I have not felt the need to be as I dated the same guy for the past six years. However, when I was in college my boss was lesbian and out. She was in a long-term relationship, and I noticed that by being out, she helped many of my co-workers who were confused about their sexuality or having trouble in a relationship. They often went to her for advice, and felt very comfortable at their job, and at having their girlfriends stop by, which probably would not have otherwise been the case.

So I think it's very helpful for people to be visibly out, but the circumstances have to be right. I think it's a disservice for people to be forced out. The timing of such things is very personal. I personally wouldn't want to be out right now, and see no reason for me to be, as I'm not currently dating anyone. However, if I were in a long-term relationship with a woman, I would reconsider that.

As part of the rather lengthy written application for my job, I wrote about my involvement in the bisexual networks: my sexual orientation was, if anything, considered a positive factor in hiring me. The American Friends' Service Committee is a very progressive organization, committed to GLBT liberation. With my coworkers it

TransActions

TransActions is run by Trans-identified youth whose focus is to advocate education, peer support, community involvement and the integration of gender equity in local legislative and social programs. The group meets every Thursday 6-7 p.m. at Boston GLASS. Open to all supportive LGBTQ, friends, family, and significant. Contact Jeffrey for more info: 617-287-9357.

GLAAD Seminars on Improving Workplace for Queers

The Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) sponsors a 90-minute "Sexual Orientation in the Workplace" seminar that can help companies establish a more productive work environment by ensuring greater inclusion and by eliminating stigma, fear, and bigotry based on sexual orientation. The intent is to help companies foster a workplace climate of openness, teamwork, and cooperation. This ground-breaking program was developed by Hollywood Supports, the entertainment industry's workplace project on AIDS and sexual orientation issues, which delivered over 400 seminars until transferring the program to GLAAD in September 1997.

The "Sexual Orientation in the Workplace" seminar is available as a stand-alone program or as a component of a workplace diversity series. GLAAD also offers a version of the seminar, developed with the assistance of professional journalists and editors, designed especially for news media workplaces. If you have any questions or would like to schedule a seminar, please contact Jane Ralph at 816-756-5991 or e-mail ralph@glaad.org.

GLAAD also has a Bi Visibility Project that has a web page with a reading list, resources, and several other areas of interest to bis. Check it out at: www.glaad.org/glaad/bi_visibility/index.html. The national office of GLAAD is located at 1825 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., 5th Floor, Washington, DC 20009, 202-986-1360.

Scarlet Letters

Scarlet Letters: A Journal of Femmerotica (<http://scarletletters.com>), an online erotica and sexuality journal is seeking submissions of fiction, nonfiction, and poetry for upcoming issues. *Scarlet Letters* has produced quarterly since February of 1997. For further guidelines, review the magazine's submissions page at: <http://scarletletters.com/submit.html>



All in Your Mind

All In Your Mind is seeking new and established writers and artists to be part of a new online erotic publication in November 1999. Areas of immediate interest include, but are not limited to, original work in fiction (short stories and serialized novels), poetry, photography (B/W and color), graphic arts (drawings and prints), audio and non-commercial video. Send a brief e-mail bio with credits and samples of your very best to Erindira Katz at erindira@allinyourmind.com. We'll review your material and then send submission guidelines and payment schedules to those who catch our eye and spark our erotic interests.


has not been an issue but because most of the time I work in a different location than they do, I face other challenges.

I coordinate a program which gathers and distributes material assistance. The people I work with on a day-to-day basis are volunteers (who I supervise) and people from agencies who use our services. I have not kept my sexual orientation a secret, but I notice that I don't refer to it often with most of my volunteers. Some of my reticence is about keeping healthy boundaries in the workplace and some of it is my internalized biphobia. Many of them are of an older generation, and while they seem to be able to handle the idea of a gay couple in a monogamous relationship, I'm not sure about how they would respond to my more nontraditional life. I notice with the younger adult or more "counterculture" volunteers I tend to be more open.

In my other life as a storyteller and workshop leader, I have been out in the adult storytelling community. I have lead workshops on eliminating racism and homophobia — it was scary, but very rewarding. In general, people have been more open and more willing to take in new ideas than I expect. I would like to do more telling in schools, and for that I do not advertise my sexual orientation, but I wouldn't lie about it if asked. Sometimes I experience gay/biphobia indirectly in the storytelling community, but it's been very subtle. Many people have been very accepting and I have made close friendships. By coming out, I have made it safe for several others to come out (at least to me), or become more open-minded about sexual orientation.

I feel very lucky to work primarily in environments where I can be out. It hasn't always been the case! I found it drained my energy and morale when I felt I had to hide big chunks of my life at work. I am sympathetic to people who are terrified to be out at work — I know how hard it can feel. I think a good strategy for coming out is to "nose" out your coworkers who seem safe, build a relationship with them and then come out. Then you have a base of support to go further if you choose. At least you have some people at work who have a fuller picture of you as a human being.

Everyone has to figure out for one's self how appropriate it is for them and how much to reveal about himself or herself. Everyone has to figure out if it's his or her internalized bi-phobia or homophobia that is getting in the way, or if there is real danger of getting fired or harassed. Everyone has to decide for her or himself if it makes sense to stay in a job where one has to stay in the closet. This is the first job that I've had where it's felt this safe to be this out. I just wish everyone could have such a supportive atmosphere. Some day, I hope!

— Annie 

On the Job: Part II


By 

As I become more comfortable with my identity as a bisexual, biracial, and bicultural woman, I find it easier to share my experiences with others. My last article in the issue on "Children" ended with my coming out to the youngest of three children of the family I work with. At that point, it was two down and one to go. The last of the three, Taylor, is a sixteen-year-old boy with a good self-disposition, but quiet demeanor.


It was a Monday afternoon and I was busy chatting on the phone to a friend about the upcoming topic of "Coming Out" to be discussed at the Tuesday night Bi Rap group at the Women's Center. (Plug, plug) I was suddenly startled by Taylor's presence in the room. Unknown to me, he'd been home all morning. I began to wonder....How long has he been standing there? How much of my conversation has he heard? I then realized that I had continued talking regardless of his attendance. After a few moments of listening to my conversation, he blurts out at me, "You're homophobic, aren't you?" I was stunned and almost speechless. I looked at him with a look of surprise and said, "No. Hardly." He argued with me, "Yes you are. I can tell. Why else wouldn't you want to talk about people coming out?" He had a point, but was still wrong. I told my friend what he said and we laughed. If he only knew!

Later that afternoon, Taylor and I were in the kitchen together. I decided that this might be a good time to discuss things with him. I started. "So, you think I'm homophobic, huh?"


Taylor: "Well, I don't know. Probably not. But why didn't you want to hear people talk about coming out?"

 "Oh, that. Well, it's the topic for the group I go to. We've discussed it several times before, and I wasn't sure if I wanted to discuss it again. Sometimes you just need a break from talking about it."


T: "So, is this a gay group?"

 "No. Actually it's a group for bisexual women called Bi Rap. We discuss issues concerning bi women."

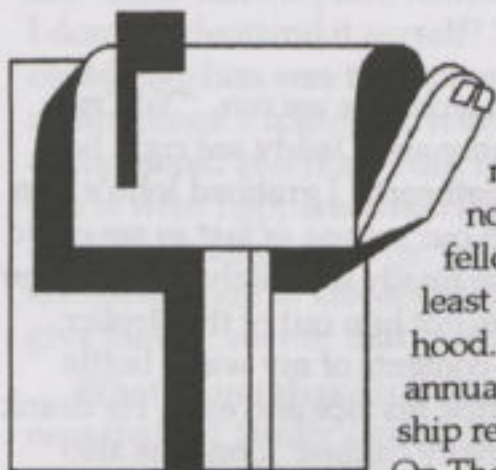
T: "So, are you bisexual then?"

 "Why, yes, I am."

T: "Yeah. I know. Martha (his older nineteen-year-old sister) told me a while ago."

So, without getting into the ... why did you ask me then; I figured it was his way of letting me know that he *did* know and was okay with it. It was out. End of story....for now. 

Letter to the Editor: OOPS Excludes Bis



Well, it appears we bisexuals are still not wanted and not considered fellow travelers, at least in my neighborhood. I sent in my annual \$10 membership renewal for Out On The Parkways

(OOPS) with a request that the word "bisexuals" be included in their newsletter. Luis and I have been members for three years. We are listed as a bisexual married couple in their directory. We never made any efforts to pretend we're not bi. We are listed as a couple. My dentist is a member. A man for whose organization I have volunteered hundreds of hours and raised thousands of dollars is a member. A member of my religious group is a member.

Here is the note I got back from OOPS along with my uncashed check [with both names on it] for \$10.00.

"Eileen, OOPS is a social group for gays and lesbians. We have not defined our group beyond that description and we have no plans to do so. Therefore we will not honor your request to include bisexuals in our publications. In light of this information, you may decide to look else-

where for a group that can meet your needs. Sincerely KD, OOPS"

Well, when I read that note on a half page of plain white paper, I guess I didn't rate a full page or even a return mailing address, I felt like my face had been slapped.

Now what tone of voice was that last line written in, I wonder: The snide "don't-darken-our-doorstep-with-the-likes-of-you" tone of voice or that condescending helpful meaning well tone one uses with little children and the elderly. Sigh... Yeah... duh, I know there are "groups that can meet my needs." This group [OOPS] covers my section of Boston and parking is free and available when they have their little monthly coffee hours. Luis and I did go to one of these groups at a coffeehouse and we were totally ignored by the group, no one introduced themselves to us or made us feel welcome. We did not go back. We did like getting the newsletter that shrank from four pages to one over the past three years. Guess I'll have to read the newsletter for free on their website: <http://www.dwellingsma.com/oops.html>

So I guess Eleanor Roosevelt, Sandra Bernhard, Janice Ian, et al would also not be welcome at OOPS. And the beat goes on...

Eileen Velez, Hyde Park, MA

Young Women Artists Sought



Boston's Young Feminist Collective is looking for female artists in the Boston area for an upcoming variety/multimedia show in mid to late October or early November. The collective is looking for all artists including, but not limited to, sculptors, writers (zines, spoken word, etc), film makers, painters/illustrators, playwrights/actors, dancers, musicians, and photographers. If you are interested in performing at the show or want to help organize it, call Taylor at 617-264-2386, Meg at 781-862-9864, or e-mail Fall_variety@hotmail.com.



Movie Review: *Better Than Chocolate*

Reviewed by Elle Thomas

This movie offers a bit of everything — skinheads, nude body painting, musical numbers, good comedic dialogue — and most every scene is enjoyable. But this is not a statement film, nor is it always well-developed. The primary characters, Maggie (Karyn Dwyer) and Kim (Christina Cox), have little chemistry and their instant love affair is implausible. The lone bisexual character, Carla, is depicted as a nymphomaniac seductress. In an early scene Carla is told, "You're not bisexual, you're omnisexual. You're like the tornado in *The Wizard of Oz*, sweeping up everything in its path." In context this was comical, not offensive. But, alas, Carla is shown with a man, never with a woman.

The character whose motivations are under-

stood best is Judy, a male-to-female transgendered character (played by Peter Outerbridge). She and Maggie's mother Lila (Wendy Crewson) have the most developed and believable relationship in the film, and they steal the show from the younger actors. Judy's nightclub scene alone ("I'm Not a Fucking Drag Queen") is worth the price of popcorn. Lila's liberation from her chocolate compulsion is another skillful scene that offers comic relief from more dramatic storylines.

Better than Chocolate is lighthearted, entertaining, and sweet. It is neither condescending nor mean, but neither is it beyond some stereotyping. It does ring a bit false on occasion — when violence does occur, the outcome is not true to reality (think Disney, not David Lynch), and no woman would simply drive away from a woman who has just been threatened by skinheads in an alley as Kim does in her initial meeting of Maggie. It unfolds like a mainstream-Hollywood movie, one that just happens to be set in queer space. That such a movie can get made and distributed is satisfaction enough. We should tolerate its faults and enjoy the fairy tale. See it with friends or bring a date, drop all agendas and expectations, laugh a lot, and leave the cinema with a smile.

Dialogue II: Jewish Queer Women and Others

Sunday, October 17, the Brandeis Women's Studies Program and Jewish Women International and Hadassah will hold Dialogue II for Jewish lesbian and bisexual women, their grandmothers, mothers, sisters, daughters, partners, and friends. This is a continuation of a discussion started two years ago. Jyl Lynn Felman, author of *Cravings*, and Ruth Berman and Connie Kurtz, subjects of "More Than a Love Story" will be present at the dialogue. For more information, contact 1-800-232-2624 or 413-774-2256, or e-mail KLMDri@aol.com.

Queer Families Attacked In San Diego

By Eve Diana

"Mommy, why did they throw teargas at us?" These are my three year old son's words to me after our family was attacked on July 24 while marching in San Diego's Gay and Lesbian Pride March.

We had begun the annual festivity with a group of 70 children, parents and grandparents. Our contingent, Family Matters, had been named this year's Outstanding Community Organization. We planned to follow the march route through downtown San Diego and spend the rest of the day at the Pride Festival in Balboa Park. My family proudly wore matching shirts festooned with custom made rainbow signs: mine read "Queer by Nature" (because I truly believe I am and always have been), John (my best friend and partner, who is heterosexual) wore "Queer by Association" and our son Julian wore "Queer by Heritage." This was our day to celebrate our community and our pride in who we are. Gay Pride is our carnival, our old-home week, our family reunion.

A few minutes into the march, the unthinkable happened: someone threw a teargas canister that landed and exploded just beside the families.

I saw the column of smoke and people racing away. I heard the screams. But my mind couldn't register what was happening until I tried to draw a breath and felt my throat on fire. John dashed down the street with Julian's stroller, and I followed as best I could. Having recently recovered from pneumonia, my lungs were already in a weakened condition — I couldn't keep up. John kept turning to look for me; I kept waving him on. "Run! Get Julian out of here!" I had to stop to cough and try to breathe, a futile effort. Two strangers grabbed my arms and pulled me along with them, choking and hacking.

Finally, I met up with them blocks away. Julian was screaming in pain and terror. John didn't want to stop to pick him up and tried to

comfort him with words as we ran. "You're okay, baby. Mommy and Daddy are right here. You'll be fine sweetheart." I grabbed John's arm and we continued our escape as fast as we could manage. When we finally felt safely out of range of the smoke, John got him out of the stroller, and I poured the contents of my water bottle onto a tissue to wipe his face and eyes. He drank some juice and finally calmed. John was also okay once he washed his own face and eyes. I was still gasping. Snot and spit streamed from my nose and mouth. My face burned as tears made contact with my skin.

I wanted to go home but John insisted, "We have to go back and finish the march." He was right. More than ever, our visibility was vital, particularly in the face of the terrorist who wanted us all to disappear.

So we marched to the bitter end: Julian clinging to John's neck, the two of us pushing the empty stroller, our tattered signs peeling off our bodies, me alternately sobbing and coughing, trying to acknowledge the cheers of the crowds who encouraged us every step of the way. There was no triumphant celebration for us when we reached the end at Balboa Park.

John pushed Julian

on the swings while I sat on the grass retching and spitting.

We went home, put our son to bed and watched the news. The hate crime received only a brief mention. None of the coverage noted that the attacker had targeted babies, children, and pregnant women, sending four to the hospital. John went out to buy Cap'n Crunch cereal for me. As a comfort food, it was a bad choice — I discovered my mouth bled when I ate it.

The next day we returned to the Pride Festival, mostly hoping to connect with other "survivors." Because the group we were marching with had scattered, I needed to know how everyone was. And to talk about it. It was a beginning.

Two days later, I was still coughing and the



Long-time BBWN member Eve and family celebrating Boston Pride 1997. (L to R) John Murdzek, Eve, Lillian Cohen (Eve's mom), and Julian Murdzek.

burns on my face were peeling. My son asked me repeatedly, "Why did they throw teargas at us?" How can I explain hatred to my son when I don't understand it myself? The only answer I could give him was that some people do very mean things. I compared it to the bullies he's encountered at school. I did not tell him that this is what happens when bullies grow up and can buy deadly weapons. We will continue to encourage him to talk about it, even if I can't give him an answer that makes it all better.

What I can't shake is a deep feeling of sadness that my family's safety shield has been pierced. Everyone's got one — the protective fence you erect mentally that lets you operate day to day in spite of the frightening and violent world around us. But after Pride Day's in-your-face incident, and someone scrawling "FAG" on our car the week before, I feel as though my shield has been ripped away, and all I want to do is hide. I've had flashbacks repeatedly since the incident, and find myself crying at my computer, my throat burning at the memory.

The attacker has not been found. The reward offered for information leading to his arrest grows. A longtime activist, I now feel leaden and paralyzed. I couldn't protect my son from this horror, and next time it might be worse. We all paid a price for choosing to be visible as a gay family. My son, who has yet to touch a toy weapon or view a violent television program, now knows what a hate crime is.

I'm trying to react as a responsible parent. Be an adult. Don't wallow. The survivor tapes kick in: turn this, somehow, into something useful. Bring the issue to my son's preschool as an object lesson. Teach the children how to deal with their anger in healthy ways. Teach them not to fear and hate people who are different from them. Teach them that gay families are just that: families, loving and overextended and boring and just like every other color and breed of family out there. My mind focuses on the children; is it too late to teach their parents that intolerance is the true evil, not other people?

But more than that, I want my son to go to sleep at night still believing that his parents can keep him safe. I want to approach my car with its purple Tinky-Winky doll on the dashboard and



Julian at the end of Pride 97.

its rainbow bumper stickers without a sick sense of apprehension of what graffiti I might find on it. I want my mouth to heal so I can eat Cap'n Crunch again. I want to give my son back his peace of mind. I want mine back too.

Creating Change Conference

The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute is again sponsoring the annual Creating Change conference for activists in the GLBT movement. This year's conference is being held at the Marriott City Center Hotel in downtown Oakland, California. November 10-11 is a pre-conference and then November 12-14 the full conference is underway. There will be over 150 trainings, workshops, panels, caucuses, and meetings that enhance political skills and build confidence of activists and organizers. On the morning of November 14, wrap-up workshop sessions will be followed by a closing brunch and plenary session. Attend screenings of new films and videotapes, peruse photo exhibits, dance the night away, or check your e-mail in the cybercafe. For more information, see www.creatingchange.org or e-mail creatingchange@nglftf.org or call 202-332-6483 x3329.

Brainstorming from page 3

The final agenda item that we got to was dealing with the old Diva list. This was a list that was initiated about three years ago to coordinate who volunteers to do what for the organization. The new Diva List looks like this:

Buttons Diva (Tracks button sales): Robyn Ochs

Newsletter Mailing Diva (Runs bimonthly newsletter stuffings): Elle Thomas and Linda

Mailing List Diva (Keeps the mailing data base): Gail Zacharias

Postal Diva (Distributes mail): Ellyn Ruthstrom

New Member Diva (Gets info to new members): [REDACTED]

Events/Brunch Diva (Asks folks to host brunches): Amy Wyeth

Women's Center Liaison Diva (Stocks newsletters, contact w/Center): Elle Thomas

Dollar Diva (Treasurer): Robyn Ochs

Newsletter Diva (Editor): Ellyn Ruthstrom

Introductory Meeting Diva (Runs bimonthly

intro meeting at Women's Center): Annie Goglia and [REDACTED]

To top off the night, Robyn asked for some appreciation of Ellyn for the work she has been doing on the newsletter and for the organization generally. (See page 2 for photo of appreciation being given.)

It was a very productive meeting. The next one is scheduled for November 4th at the Living Center and will focus more on future events and fundraising ideas. Come share your ideas.

La Red

The Network

**para Lesbianas y Mujeres
Bisexuales Maltratadas**

*for Battered Lesbians and
Bisexual Women*

P.O. Box 6011; Boston, MA 02114

Office/Oficina: (V/TTY/Fax) 617.695.0877

Hotline/Línea de Crisis: (V/TTY) 617.423.SAFE

e-mail/correo electrónico: nblbw@erols.com

Swing Dance into the Fall

"Swingtime," swing and ballroom dances will be held on the first Saturday of each month this fall: October 2, November 6, and December 4 at Ballet, Etc. Dance Studio in Brookline. Beginners swing lesson start at 8 p.m., dancing to DJ 9-11:30 p.m. \$7 per person. No partner necessary. Free parking and refreshments. Smoke and alcohol free. Call 617-364-7207 for information.

Bi Politician Attends Meeting With President

By Ellyn Ruthstrom

By reading the coverage in the queer press you'd never know that a prominent bisexual politician was part of a contingent of queer elected officials who met with President Clinton in July. Connecticut State Representative Evelyn Mantilla, an out bi politician, was one of the twelve queer politicians who met at the White House on July 28, yet in the several publications that I read the word bisexual was never mentioned. One article (in Ohio's *Gay People's Chronicle*) even went to the trouble of including Mantilla's description to the President of her and her partner's battle to adopt a child, but did not identify her as bisexual.

The Lesbian and Gay Victory Fund provided a list of possible attendees to the White House; the President wanted to meet a balanced representation from around the country and officials he had not met before. The Victory Fund reports that

there are 180 openly queer elected officials in the United States. I do wonder how many of those identify as bi (or if the Victory Fund even keeps track of that category).

Our community should be proud of the work that Rep. Mantilla does in her state and glad that she was part of this important meeting. I do, however, wish that she could be correctly identified in the press, especially the queer press. ▽

E-mail List for Bis in Northern New England

If you live in Northern New England, check out a list intended for the discussion of events and subjects of interest to, as well as support and socializing, for bisexual, bi-curious and bi-supportive people in your region. To subscribe, send request to Majordomo@rulesthe.net with the phrase "subscribe binne" (do not use the quote marks) in the body of the message. Please leave signature and subject line empty. For questions or more info, write to: Binne, P.O. Box 10818, Portland, ME 04104 or e-mail owner-binne@rulesthe.net. Visit the BINNE web page at <http://w3.ime.net/~eor/derien/binne>. ▽



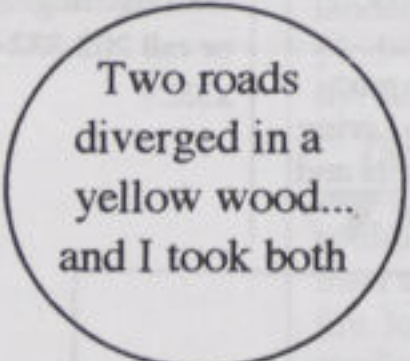
Web site tip from Elle:
www.slik.org.uk/women.html.
Lots of links about famous bi women!!!

BETH DAMSKY, MSW, LICSW

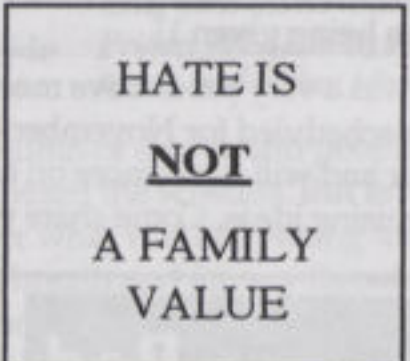
Psychotherapy and Consultation

50 Dudley Street
Cambridge, MA 02140
617.497.6581

Show your VISIBILITY with buttons!



Two roads
diverged in a
yellow wood...
and I took both



HATE IS
NOT
A FAMILY
VALUE

Other designs include:

- If God had meant for people to be bisexual there would be two sexes
- I'm bisexual and I'm NOT attracted to you
- Racism, sexism, homophobia — Recognize the Connections
- Bisexual Pride
- VISIBILITY

Please send \$2.00 per button (includes postage) to:
BBWN, P.O. Box 400639, Cambridge, MA 02140

Poetry

My Definition of a Friend By Tamika Kitchen

You are one third of me
without you I can not be.
A love not in the way meaning
family member or lover
but a relationship worth believing
and worth redeeming.

If good times turn to bad
always keep your faith in what you had.
You could still have it again
because that is the definition of a friend. ▽

CALENDAR *continued from page 12*

other bisexual people of color for a potluck dinner and discussion group. A small donation is requested to help pay for the space. The group meets in the library at the Boston Living Center at 29 Stanhope St. in Boston. For more information, call 617-424-9595 and leave a message for Ananda or Maria Christina. Para informacion en espanol 617-277-2017.

October 31 ♦ Sunday

Biversity Brunch, 1:30 p.m. Start your Hallowe'en with vegetarian food at Buddha's Delight in Boston's Chinatown. On Beach Street between Harrison and Washington. Chinatown T stop on the Orange Line.

November 2 ♦ Tuesday

Bi Rap at the Women's Center, 7:30-9:00 p.m. Call 617-354-8807 for topic. See October 5th



Thanks for reading
BiWomen.

Do you subscribe?

How about a little
commitment?

November 3 ♦ Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m. See October 6th.

November 4 ♦ Thursday

BBWN Brainstorming Meeting, 7-9 p.m. We'll bring food for a potluck at 6:00 and then start meeting at 7.

November 5 ♦ Friday

Biversity Movie Outing, 6:45 p.m. We'll be meeting at the Kendall Square Cinema in Cambridge at 6:45 p.m., deciding on a movie to watch and watching it. The cinema is at 1 Kendall Square in Cambridge, Kendall Square T stop.

November 7 ♦ Sunday

"True Confessions," storytelling for adults by BBWN's own Annie Goglia, 1:30 p.m. At New Words Bookstore, 186 Hampshire St., Cambridge. It's an often funny, sometimes moving and completely true story of a Catholic girl's journey through childhood into a rebellion of the mind and spirit in adolescence. For more info e-mail Annie at kalamari@juno.com.

November 10 ♦ Wednesday

Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting, 7-9 p.m. See October 13th.

BBWN Introductory Meeting, 7:30-9:00 p.m.. A safe space for women to connect with the bisexual community. Cambridge Women's Center, 26 Pleasant St., Cambridge, 617-354-8807.

November 14 ♦ Sunday

BBWN Brunch at Ellyn's in Somerville, 11:30 a.m. Call for directions, 617-623-5535.

November 16 ♦ Tuesday

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m. See October 6th.

Bi Rap at the Women's Center, 7:30-9:00 p.m. Call 617-354-8807 for topic. See October 5th.

BiWomen Submissions Deadline. This issue's theme is "Rituals and Celebrations." Send submissions to: *BiWomen*, P.O. Box 400639, Cambridge, MA 02140 or e-mail to eruthstr@mail.lesley.edu.

November 17 ♦ Thursday

Bi Space, 7-9 p.m. See October 20th.

November 19 ♦ Friday

Bi Coffee, 7:30 p.m. Start the weekend off right with other Biversity folks at the Diesel Cafe in Davis Square. Enjoy delicious coffee drinks and great company at 257 Elm Street in Somerville.

November 20 ♦ Saturday

Biversity Brunch at Johnny D's in Davis Square in Somerville, 11:30 a.m. Right across the street from the Davis Square T stop.

Biversity Planning Meeting, 1:00 p.m. The meeting will follow immediately after the brunch at Johnny D's. Bring your great ideas for upcoming events!

November 23 ♦ Tuesday

Biversity Calendar Mailing at BRC Office, 7-9 p.m.

November 28 ♦ Sunday

Biversity Brunch, 1:00 p.m. Take a break from Thanksgiving leftovers, and enjoy Malaysian food and cozy decor and be thankful for our great bi community at Penang, 685 Washington St. in Boston's Chinatown. Orange Line T.

November 29 ♦ Monday

Bisexual People of Color Potluck Dinner, 7-9 p.m. Boston Living Center, 29 Stanhope St. See October 25th.

November 30 ♦ Tuesday

BBWN Pre-mailing Dinner, 6 p.m. at Bertucci's on Stanhope St., just two doors down from the Bi Office.

BiWomen mailing, 7-9 p.m. at the Bi Office. Label, stuff, and lick. Actually the licking is *after* the mailing. Ha! Join us.

Biversity Boston is the mixed gender bisexual Network of Greater Boston.

Ongoing Events

4th Mondays:

Bi People of Color Potluck, 7-9 p.m. at the Boston Living Center, 29 Stanhope St. For info call 617-424-9595.

1st & 3rd

Thursdays:

Bi Women's Resource & Support Group, 7 p.m. at the Women's Health Consortium, 379 State St., Portsmouth, NH. For info call 603-431-1669 or contact Sue Corcoran at schmoo@nh.ultranet.com.

Women's Club Nights

Saturdays: Lava Bar in Kenmore Square, 575 Commonwealth Ave. at the Howard Johnson's.



SUBSCRIPTION RATE for BiWomen (sliding scale)

___\$0-\$20 (pay what you can)

___\$20-\$30 (suggested)

___\$30-\$100

____New Subscriber

____Renewal

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE (Optional) _____

BBWN, P.O. BOX 400639, Cambridge, MA 02140

The "Bi Office"

is the Bisexual Resource Center, located at 29 Stanhope Street, behind Club Cafe, right next door to Bertucci's and just down the street from the Hard Rock Cafe. For info call 617-424-9595.

Ongoing Events

1st & 3rd Tuesdays:

Bi Women's Rap. 7:30 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. For info and discussion topics call 617-354-8807.

Wednesdays:

Gendertalk. 8:30-9:30 p.m. on WMBR 88.1 FM. Deals with transgender and queer issues.

2nd Thursdays:

Single Jewish Lesbian and Bisexual Women's Group. 6:30-8 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant Street. Info: 617-499-9612.

Bi Married Women's Support Group. 7-9 p.m. at the Bi Office. For bi women who are married to or in a relationship with a man. Call Debbie at 617-782-2754 for info.

3rd Thursdays:

SpeakOut Meeting. 8 p.m., at the Boston Living Center, 29-33 Stanhope St., Boston. Wheelchair accessible. General meeting at 6:45 p.m., theme program starts at 8 p.m. Info: 617-354-0133.

CALENDAR

October 2-3 ♦ Saturday - Sunday

Speaker Training sponsored by SpeakOut will be held this year at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston. For more information call 617-450-9581 or find the registration form at www.SpeakOutBoston.org.

October 5 ♦ Tuesday

Bi Rap at the Women's Center, 7:30-9:00 p.m. Topic: "Dreams and Fantasies." Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., 617-354-8807.

October 6 ♦ Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m. An informal support group for people who think they may be bisexual or attracted to more than one sex. A small donation is requested to help pay for the space. The group meets at the Bisexual Resource Center at 29 Stanhope St. in Boston. Call 617-424-9595 for info.

October 9 ♦ Saturday

Fall Ball for Women, 8 - midnite. FEVER! Dance Productions presents "Where's Willy," a live band and other dance music. The ballroom of the Sons of Italy in Winchester. \$12 admission, cash bar. No smoking. Call 781-648-0722 or e-mail dee@djdee.com.

October 11 ♦ Monday

National Coming Out Day!!!! This day commemorates the Queer March on Washington in 1987 and is a good time to think about who you may want to come out to today. Someone at work? A family member? A neighbor? The more you do it the easier it gets. Com'on out!



October 13 ♦ Wednesday

Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting, 7-9 p.m. The BRC board meets monthly to work on educational programs, the bi office, the web site, the international bi organizing, fund raising, etc. All bi community members welcome to attend. The meeting is at 29 Stanhope St. in Back Bay.

October 15 ♦ Friday

Bi coffee, 7:30 p.m. Start the weekend off right with other Biversity folks at the Diesel Cafe in Davis Square on the Red Line. Enjoy delicious coffee drinks and great company. At 257 Elm Street in Somerville.

Susie Bright presents "Full Exposure: Opening Up to Sexual Creativity and Erotic Expression," 7:30 p.m., Wong Auditorium, corner of Amherst and Wadsworth Streets, near Kendall Square T.

October 16 ♦ Saturday

Bi Brunch, 11:30 a.m. at Doyle's at 3484 Washington Street in JP between the Green Street and Forest Hills stops on the Orange Line.

Walk in the Arboretum, 1:00 p.m. Celebrate Autumn by taking a walk in the Arboretum in Jamaica Plain. Celebrants will leave from Doyle's immediately following brunch.

October 17 ♦ Sunday

BBWN Matinee/Brunch, TBA. We'll find a current movie — preferably something queer — watch it and then find someplace for brunch afterwards to talk about it. Call Ellyn 617-623-5535 for info.



October 19 ♦ Tuesday

Coming Out as Bisexual. 7-9 p.m. See October 6th.

Bi Rap at the Women's Center, 7:30-9:00 p.m. Topic: "Femme/Butch." Dress to discuss. See October 5th.

October 20 ♦ Wednesday

Bi Space, 7-9 p.m. A friendly discussion space to meet other bisexuals and talk about bisexual issues. A \$2 donation is requested to help pay for the space. BiSpace is held at the BRC at 29 Stanhope St. in Boston.

October 21 ♦ Thursday

BBWN Pool Outing, 8 p.m. Get your pool cue and your chalk and head over to the Hideaway near Fresh Pond Circle (Behind Ma Magoo's). Remember to go upstairs where it's women's pool night. Each game is \$1.

October 22 ♦ Friday

Bi movie night at Lynne's in Somerville, 7:30 p.m. Films are: "Rose By Any Other Name" and "Second Thoughts." Both films are about bisexual women. People can arrive starting at 7 p.m., and we'll start the movies at 7:30 p.m. Please email or phone Lynne for directions: gelana@gis.net or 617-629-3170.

October 23 ♦ Saturday

BBWN Brunch at Christie's, 11:00 a.m. Come to a members' brunch in Somerville near Union Square and meet lots of fabulous bi women. Call Christie at 617-629-8587.

Biversity Franklin Park Zoo Trip, 11:00 a.m. We'll meet just outside the main entrance to Franklin Park Zoo in Jamaica Plain, and spend the day pondering our relationship to the rest of the animal kingdom. Admission is \$6 for adults.

October 25 ♦ Monday

Bisexual People of Color Potluck Dinner, 7-9 p.m. Join

CALENDAR continues on page 11

BiWomen

The Newsletter of the Boston Bisexual Women's Network

Rituals & Celebrations

Celebrating Bisexuality

By Wendy Curry

Celebrate Bisexuality Day (CBD) started out as a way to get bisexuals together for something other than a protest or a support group. We were looking for a way to unite with a positive message. "We are wonderful just as we are!" That was the idea. So much so that I devoted a large part of the last year working towards making the day a reality.

But, as the day got closer and my frustrations grew higher, I started to think about how I could best celebrate my sexuality — and I realized that the best way I could honor it was with non-bisexuals. Don't get me wrong — I love bisexuals. I devote most of my waking hours to them. But my family-of-choice happens to be made up of mostly heterosexuals.

They aren't people I grew up with; we merged our families as adults. When Sanyu got married, I went to her kwanjula, as an honorary member of the Buganda tribe (even though my ancestors are Irish and French). When Tendo, Jr. was born, I was at the hospital. Sanyu wants me to be her godmother and do the whole christening thang; I'll be there — even though I gave up the Catholic church long ago. When St. Patrick's Day came around, Tendo, Sr. was right there with me — drinking green beer. On my birthday, they surprised me with a cake — and dyke presents.

I joke that CBD is "the closest thing Wendy has to a religious holiday" — and it's true. I'm no longer Catholic. Although, I respect many aspects of the pagan and wicca religions, I don't follow either regularly enough to feel entitled to their holidays.

The message of bisexuality — the idea that people are more than their gender; that we accept all people, regardless of Kinsey scale rating; that we embrace people regardless of age, weight, clothing, hair style, gender expression, race, religion and actually celebrate our diversity — that message is my gospel. I travel, I write, I do web sites — all to let people know that the bisexual community will accept you, will let you be who you wish to be, and will not expect you to fit in a neat little gender/sexuality box.

CBD was an expression of that gospel. It gave me an opportunity to express MY sexuality in

Celebrating continues on page 12



BBWN congratulates two of its members, Megan Jewett and Carla Imperial, who were married in a ceremony at the Highlands Inn in New Hampshire in September. Megan's sister, Kristen, a Unitarian minister in Florida, officiated at the ceremony.

Reinventing Ritual

By Annie Goglia

This topic had me thinking about why ritual and celebration are so important in my life. Naming those I choose to celebrate with helps me define my community. Who are my people? My people are varied: they include my family of origin, my intentional family (people with whom I choose to share my social/emotional/spiritual life), and my wider community made up of individuals from the various groups and organizations to which I belong. Rituals provide some markers and constancy in a rapidly changing world. In this modern urban setting, they remind me of the natural cycles of the year, the cycles of my life, and of the lives of those around me.

As a feminist bisexual woman, it is important that chosen rituals in my life reflect my values. I have learned to take what I like from my memories of childhood holidays and reinvent them to suit myself. I sometimes spend holidays with my family of origin, and so may choose to attend a church service with them, or choose to enter into their way of celebrating a holiday, but I am

Reinventing continues on page 5

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Volunteers of the Month

Gail

Robyn Ochs

Elle Thomas

Christie Mase

Debbie Block-
Schwenk

Carol Gebert

Linda D.

Kathy B.



*And many more
wonderful
women! You
know who you
are! Thank you,
thank you, thank
you!*

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Ellyn Ruthstrom

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Chock Full o' Ritual

In the diverse world we live in we've come to use the vague yet still cheerful "Happy Holidays" to wish each other well this time of year. We come from many different traditions in this country — as the articles in this issue so eloquently attest to — and added to that we often break away from those that we do come from and create our own. Our choice of ritual or celebration can be based on our family of origin, our ethnicity, our faith, our politics, our partners, our sexuality, and, of course, our imagination.

I really enjoyed editing such an amazing array of responses to our theme. Writers shared some wonderful details of what constitutes ritual to them and how they celebrate the many events and passages of their lives — so many details that we went to 16 pages to fit them all in. They touch on birthdays, various religious holidays, ways of honoring the dead, ways of centering oneself as well as the history of marriage. Lots to ponder.

On page one is a photo of Megan and Carla, two long-term members of BBWN who were married this past fall in a beautiful autumn mountaintop ceremony. Their family and friends came from near and far to spend a weekend together and to celebrate the love the two women have found together. The weekend was a celebration of community and interconnection — from the first evening when those arriving early lit candles and offered individual wishes to the brides...to the statements of love and commitment Megan and Carla read to each other at the ceremony...to the closing circle of appreciation before we all departed. Their choice of celebration demonstrated a wonderful blend of traditional elements (minister, rings,



Two brides on the cake.

the first dance) with their own desire to honor their same sex relationship in a casual, loving environment. Women, we wish you well in your journey together.

Ellyn Ruthstrom

Next in *Bi Women*:

The *BiWomen* theme for
February / March is:

Bi Women Talk About Men

Is your life partner a man? How about your best friend? What turns you on about men? What gets you really angry about them? What men have been important to you in your life? What men do you admire? What men would you like to take to bed?

DEADLINE: January 10, 2000

Future Issues in 2000

April / May:

Femme / Butch

June / July:

Bi Space / Bi Politics



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Send articles, calendar entries, letters, black-and-white art, news, and views to:

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*If you do not want your name published,
please tell us.*

The Boston Bisexual Women's Network is a feminist, not-for-profit collective organization whose purpose is to bring women together for support and validation. It is meant to be a safe environment in which women of all sexual self-identities, class backgrounds, racial, ethnic and religious groups, ages, abilities and disabilities are welcome. Through the vehicles of discussion, support, education, outreach, political action and social groups related to bisexuality, we are committed to the goals of full acceptance as bisexuals within the gay and lesbian community, and to full acceptance of bisexuality and the liberation of all gay people within the larger society.

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BBWN Plans Fundraisers and Other Events

By Ellyn Ruthstrom

A group of nine people gathered for the last BBWN Brainstorming meeting of 1999. We opened with a short recap of what took place at the September meeting and set out the agenda for the evening.

First was an update about the trans policy at the Cambridge Women's Center. The Center responded by explaining that their current policy has been to allow women-born women and those who have had surgery to become women to be in the center. They are currently assessing the policy (see page for more details). Their proposed new policy would also include women who live as women full-time. Linda, who is a new Women's Center board member, added that she believes the feeling of the board and membership is very much in favor of a revision to include trans women. She will keep us posted on developments.

The group then brainstormed some fundraising ideas. BBWN will be holding its 4th annual Holiday Party (see the sidebar for details) in December and we will consider it a fundraiser. Suggested \$5-10 sliding scale at the door. A video fundraiser was also decided on;

Natalie volunteered to sponsor it at her place in January (see calendar). Other possible future events may include holding an event with a speaker, having an erotica reading night, an open mic entertainment night, or a bi women's symposium.

Some other possible future events, though not meant to be fund-raisers, are: ice skating at Frog Pond in February, a trip to Northampton (and the hot tubs), a Games Night, bowling, and a chocolate celebration. Summer activities that were suggested include: canoeing/kayaking, camping, a trip to Ptown, and a BBQ.

There is a concern to try to beef up the subscriber list. Currently, we send to about 350 subscribers — about half of that are in the Boston area — and we distribute the rest locally at bookstores and the Women's Center. It was suggested that we find out about other organizations' mailing lists to see if we can send a sample copy to them. It would also be good if someone is willing to put some time into looking for more advertisers for the newsletter. ▽

Come One,
Come All!



BBWN is throwing its fourth annual Holiday Open House Party on Saturday, December 18th and we hope you can be there. This is a fundraiser and people are asked to make a sliding scale donation (\$5-10) at the door. Members are asked to bring munchies and/or drinks to keep the expenses of the party down. Carol Gebert is hosting the party this year at her home in Cambridge. Call her at 617-491-6777 for directions and details.



Celebrate Bisexuality Day!

Just a few faces from the Bisexual Resource Center's CBD event at Club Cafe on September 23rd.
See you next year!



Millenium Mamas Matching Funds Campaign



Care to help save a piece of American feminist history? The Sewall-Beimont House in Washington, D.C. was the home of militant suffragist Alice Paul and the headquarters of the National Woman's Party. The house has been chosen as a site to receive a half million dollar preservation grant, but the catch is that it is a matching grant and the other half million has to be raised by September 2000. To make a donation towards saving this important piece of our history, send a tax-deductible contribution to: Millenium Mamas Matching Fund, Sewall-Beimont House, 144 Constitution Ave., N.E., Washington, DC, 20002, or call 202-546-1210.

What Am I?

By Jane Kaplan

I am Catholic by birth, Jewish by choice, but I'm really more agnostic by nature. On top of that, I was a religion major in college, giving me plenty of food for thought in the religious wranglings that go on in my brain from time to time. A little knowledge is a dangerous thing.

This grappling tendency of mine — as Gauguin aptly phrased it: Where do we come from? What are we? Where are we going? — is deeply a part of me, rooted in my first memories. I could be a case study for Jung's assertion that "religion is incontestably one of the earliest and most universal activities of the human mind." Unfortunately, my religion was chosen for me and took the form of so much dogma rather than the fluid journey I needed to help me find whatever it was I was looking for.

Where do I come from?

I was raised just a generation away from incense burning in churches where the words spoken were only from the old country, where the priests were as venerated as God. My great-grandparents did not speak English at all and, outside of my parents' house, it seemed like everyone in my extended family only sporadically did. It was clear that we weren't just Catholic; we were Polish-Catholic.

On Sundays and most other Holy Days, my family attended Mass — there was just no question about it. My dad was a founder of the parish in my small hometown, and he eventually became a deacon, about as close as you can get to being a priest while still being allowed to have sex. We always shared a bond over religion until I broke the faith and converted. On my wedding day, after a ceremony held in Boston's largest Reform Jewish temple, a ceremony officiated by two rabbis and permeated by every traditional symbol of Judaism, my dad told one of my friends that of course he wishes that I will someday return to my "religion of origin".

I don't know that I ever truly left my religion of origin, I don't know that I ever really could. The memories, the patterns repeated over and over are indelibly marked inside me.

Every Christmas Eve while I was growing up, both sides of my family would gather around my grandmother's small kitchen table for cardboard dry communion wafer and some of the most hideous tasting food and drink you could possibly imagine. But I loved it, every minute of it, god knows why. I ignored the cramped quarters and the un-

comfortable dress-up clothes, the obligatory visits to scary alcoholic relatives upstairs, the long stretches of time with nothing much to do, the ridiculousness of my grandmother's practical Christmas gifts. I was there for the comfort and curiosity of it all, for my family from both sides gathered together, for the spark of grownup conversation that I only partly understood, for the strange mix of personalities. It was always a very boisterous gathering, due to the number of people, due to their clashing styles — Baci (my grandmother) and Aunt Jane constantly bickering back and forth, Uncle Clement loudly discussing sports with my brother, my father and mother usually engaged in one or another of the conversations flipping between Polish and English, my grandfather sitting quietly, surveying the scene with a calm Buddha smile on his face. My sister usually sulked around, bored, but I thought there was always something exciting going on. One year, a pot on the stove caught fire, leaving Baci and Aunt Jane in utter bumping-into-each-other panic until my level-headed dad emerged from the pantry and poured baking soda over the flames to save the day. I don't think the smile ever left my grandfather's face as he said "Oh my!" I'm not sure which portion of the meal we went without that night, but I'm sure Baci and Aunt Jane continued to bicker about it all night.

What am I?


I still miss Christmas Eve, long after I abandoned Catholicism and put Christianity aside, long after I chose Judaism — chose Judaism because it was like Christianity but was not Christianity — Jesus was, after all, a Jew. Christmas Eve was a constant in the shifting sands of my life. I think we as human beings need such things in our lives, things to hold on to, things to share with others, things to brand us as one community or another. Every Friday night since my kids were born, we have lit and blessed the Shabbat candles, and ever since Sophie and Gavi were old enough to understand, we have told them how Jews around the world do the same thing, hoping to instill in them this: tradition. The children's books we have — books on Hanukkah, Passover, Shabbat — shape religious identity in that same way: We are Jews because of what we do.

I am divorced now, and I grapple all the more with my beliefs. Each night when I am with my kids, I still sing to them the Sh'ma, a prayer that proclaims God is One. I struggle to withhold this from them. How can I say this prayer? How can I say that God is One when I don't even know there is a God to be One? Each custom is scrutinized for an alignment of the act with its meaning. I steadfastly refuse to acknowledge Hanukkah as a significant holiday,

citing historical accuracy: Why do we give gifts? The Maccabees did not give gifts, they killed people and burned oil in lamps to purify their temple. There were no Wise Men.

But how can I deny my children these things? These are my battles, not theirs. It is more important now to be consistent, and to let the lessons of critical thinking come bit by bit as they grow old enough to absorb the impact. As for my own struggles, I don't know if it would be better for them to see me

practicing one faith without ambivalence, because that is more easily defined and categorized. I don't know if my meanderings will confuse them. But there is no one religion that fits me, I do not fit into any one religion. That may be the way it should be, but I miss the community. I miss doing what I do, knowing others all around the world are doing the same thing. Perhaps I will find that again in something more meaningful to me.

Where am I going? 

Women and Religion Anthology

There is a call for submissions for an anthology about women and their involvement in and/or relationship to religion. The editor is seeking creative short fiction, nonfiction, poetry and essays from women of all religious backgrounds. Please send a short bio and contact information with submissions.

Women included in the anthology will receive a copy of the finished work. For more information and/or submissions contact: Nomi Manon, 56 Powell Campus Ctr., Alfred, NY 14802 or manonnc@alfred.edu. Deadline: January 1, 2000.

Reinventing from page 1

clear now that this is my choice. It is not always easy to do knowing that parts of myself, including my bisexuality, are not celebrated in that ritual, but I can remember my whole self is good and to be celebrated!

So what does it mean to reclaim and reinvent a holiday? I loved Christmas as a child. There were the weeks of anticipation — the thrill of writing the letter to Santa, the joy of opening the flap of the advent calendar each day, the magic of decorating the Christmas tree. And then Christmas itself — soaking in the beauty of midnight Mass, running down the stairs in the morning to see the full glory of the lit tree surrounded by brightly wrapped gifts, tearing open the presents, gathering with my extended family, sharing the festive meal, which in my Italian-American family went on for hours.


As an adult I realize that much of Christmas has become a marketing opportunity. I am no longer a Christian, but am a pagan. I have chosen to keep certain markers of Christmas that fit my current beliefs. The Christmas tree has its origins in paganism. To me it is a symbol of the cycle of life — a reminder at the time of the winter solstice that the green will come again in the Spring. I decorate it with objects of beauty and meaning to me, most of which are quite non-traditional. It might sport a rainbow flag or pink triangle. Another way I keep Christmas is by participating in a winter celebration organized by my community group in December. We honor all the winter holidays — Hanukah, Winter Solstice, Kwanzaa and Christmas. To honor Christmas, we go back as close as possible to its original intent — a time of hope and joy and rebirth.

My preference is to do minimal gift-ex-

changing, and to keep gifts simple and inexpensive. I try to avoid malls and the commercial aspects of the holiday in the weeks before Christmas. On Christmas day, a small quiet gathering of friends, or dinner out at an Asian restaurant suits me. This year and last, I will spend Christmas with my family of origin, so I will not celebrate it in the way I would at home — but it is a choice I am making in order to be with my elderly parents — my gift to them.

My birthday is another time of celebration — a time to be with my friends and intentional family. In celebrating my most recent birthday, I wanted to go dancing, one of the joys of my life. I wanted to share this with my friends — bi, straight and gay. So I invited people to come to Dance Friday. Dance Friday is a weekly event of free form dancing for people of all ages, organized by a group of volunteers and held in a dance studio in Watertown Square. People wear loose comfortable clothing which is sometimes very colorful and wild. Dancers are asked not to wear regular shoes on the dance floor so it won't get damaged. Even if you don't dance much, it's fun to watch, or hang out talking in the adjacent room.

Dance Friday is one of the few places I know where any sexual orientation is truly welcomed. (For me, the fact that it is smoke and alcohol-free is a big plus too.) In straight dance places, women can usually dance together without flack if they are not behaving in a sexual way with each other. At Dance Friday, it's often hard to guess people's sexual orientation since straight men and women are physically affectionate with same sex friends, and will often dance with same sex partners. The atmosphere is friendly and welcoming. It's been sweet to share this with my friends, especially people from the bi network.

I thought deepest winter in New England would be a great time to warm up and socialize at Dance Friday. Join me and other BBWN members for bi night at Dance Friday on January 14th — let's celebrate! 



Women of Color Film and Video Festival

The 9th Annual Women of Color Film and Video Festival: The Color of Violence will take place on May 5-6, 2000 at the University of California, Santa Cruz. There is a call for submissions of features, shorts, documentaries, and experimental and animated works. This festival will focus on violence against women of color and is organized in conjunction with the national conference, The Color of Violence: Violence Against Women of Color, on April 28-29, 2000 also at UCSC. Submissions in VHS format, press packets, and artist biographies are due by January 14, 2000. All works submitted must include a self-addressed stamped envelope for return; those without will be added to our library and will become resources for the educational and activist projects of the UCSC Women of Color Research Cluster. Send submissions to: The Women of Color Research Cluster, Oakes College, UCSC, Santa Cruz, CA 95064.

Odd Occasions

By Marcia Diehl

Invented occasions have always seemed normal to me. They weren't necessarily related to being bisexual, although one in particular was. In fact, my "I'm Settled" turning thirty party may have inspired my father a couple of years later to have his own original celebration. In 1982, my Dad asked for a "Hiatus Party," in lieu of a retirement party. He was well into his fourth or fifth "post-retirement career" as he called it, as a freelance writer of a column called "Once Over Sixty" in the Lancaster, PA *Gazette*. Part of his philosophical message was to cultivate a love for lifelong learning: "I'm not retiring," he'd say, "I will never retire. I'm just in hiatus between my career and my first post-retirement career."

So when he asked me to throw him a party, I didn't think twice, even about the fact that it would be in Cambridge, where he didn't know a soul. No matter — his Happy Hiatus Party took place in my apartment in Cambridgeport that year. I started by inviting all of my friends and asking them to bring something to share about life cycles and transformations. My singing partner Russ, wearing a new diamond stud in one ear, sang an African song with a lot of neat clicking noises. When he finished, he proceeded to give my Dad a big hug and a sloppy congratulatory kiss on the cheek. Later, Dad confided to me, "Men don't . . . uh . . . kiss in Lancaster, but that was . . . OK." (He didn't look convinced. But he asked for it, after all, it was Cambridge.) Friend Karen shared a poem based on her dream about being one of Henry VIII's wives, working in the garden on a spring day. Johanna, a health food nut, made a green-iced cake with a little man resting by a bridge connecting to another green-iced cake which read "Happy Hiatus!" (It looked wonderful and somewhat Japanese, with the little black bridge, but it tasted like sand and flour.) My ex, Kit, and her parents sang along with "Happy Hiatus To You" as we toasted my father with soda water and champagne.

Many of my friends have also invented their own rituals and celebrations. (Either I collect creative eccentrics as friends or they pick

me.) Karen Lindsey (the aforementioned poet friend) threw herself a Sterilization Shower when she was twenty. Back then, the doctors were scandalized that a "fertile young woman" was so sure she didn't want to fulfill her motherly mandate. She and I somehow managed to escape the "biological clock" syndrome, which supposedly makes all women wish to bear children. In fact, she was so happy to be done with the whole mess that she even celebrated a hysterectomy. Although she was too busy to hold a real party, she did decorate her Christmas tree with festive tampon holders as a final declaration of independence.

Another friend, Norm Davis (whom I met at a bisexual conference in 1984), put an ethnic twist on his alternative celebration. He gave himself a "Bizarre Mitzvah" ("Now I really am a man! What did I know at thirteen?"), laying

out a fine dinner party for family and friends. Afterwards, he put on a performance piece in which he hopped around on the furniture dressed in rubber boots and a beach-towel cape (a boy-hood Superman fantasy, I think).

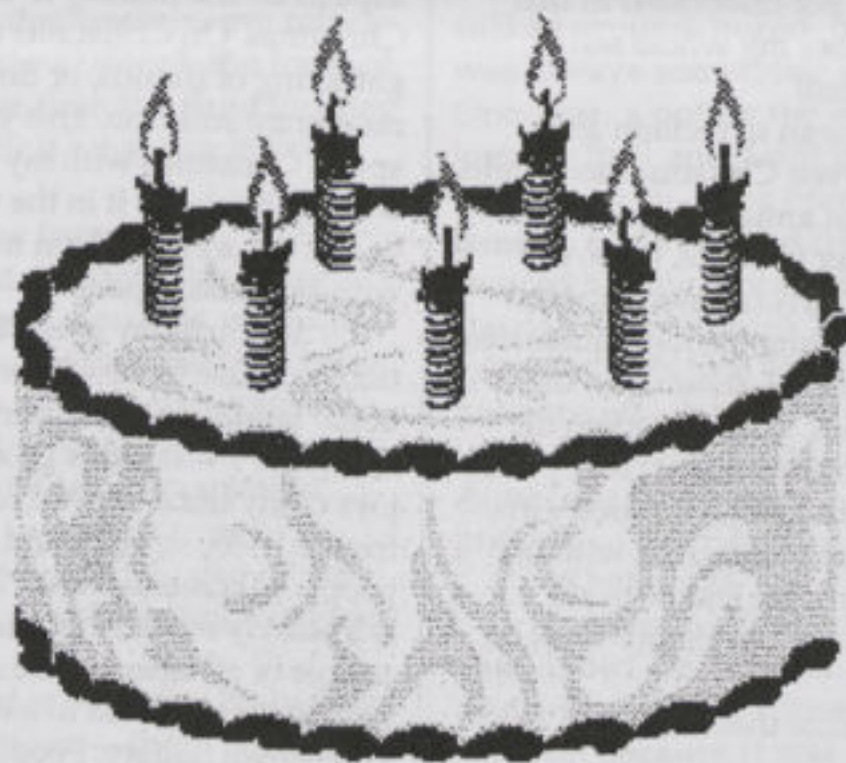
Another bisexual friend, the late but never-to-be forgotten Joanna Lancaster (an original member of the BBWN founding group, the BiVocals)

gave a birthday party for her car, complete with odes, favors, party hats, and streamers for the large metal guest. And their owners.

Speaking of owners, I still have a photograph of several women howling along with their well-dressed dogs at Kit's collie's birthday party at Fresh Pond, before such things were controversial. Half a dozen happy dogs competed at games like "Stay" and "Fetch," with treats for dog and human alike.

But one party is closest to my heart and my history. When I turned thirty, I threw an "I'm Settled" party. Unmarried, bisexual, and proud (or at least happy), I'd noticed that when my brother got married at age twenty-one, he raked in a lot of gifts and appliances. And then there was that beautiful Chinese teapot from my Great Uncle Weidman which was being saved for me until I was "settled." Since I was not yet married and had no intention of ever being so, I felt it was my duty to make a statement and just declare myself settled. (Not to mention, I also wanted my stuff.)

First I wrote a tongue-in-cheek song with a country-western sort of beat:



I'm Settled

1. When I was just a little girl, I wasn't dressed in pink,
But there were always subtle things to make me stop and think.
One day, up in the attic, my folks found a fine old kettle,
"It's been in the family for years," they said,
"and we'll give it to you when you're settled."

CHORUS: Well I'm settled, whoa, I'm settled,
No hubby, no house, no car, no kid,
And no regrets for what I didn't or I did.
I'm settled, yeah, I'm settled,
And when I turn thirty gonna give a big party
Just to say, 'I declare I'm settled!'

2. Well some folks I know have married, and
some have untied that knot,
And when I look at all of them, some are settled
and some are not.
It's not a piece of paper, it happens deep inside.
You shake hands with your choices, then sit
back and enjoy the ride.

CHORUS

3. It's not that I'm a rambler, or I'm too tough to care,
There's friends I love and work to do and a worn-in easy chair,
Need I explain? I just live and let live, no cause
to worry or meddle,
Bring on the crock pots, silver and towels, I'll
put 'em in my home and get settled!"

Since I had the song, I thought I'd give the party, sending out invitations that impersonated wedding stationery. Several musicians, friends, ex-s, and workmates came bearing tablecloths, appliances, and matched place settings. Although my parents couldn't make it in person, they sent the teapot, as well as this telegram:

"Good luck to daughter,
From Muddah and Faddah.
A girl of mettle
Will never settle!"

There seemed to be a need out there for such a song, because people liked it and it ended up being tiny-pond famous. The New Harmony Sisterhood Band, my women's band from 1973-1980 performed it, and it spread to a few other albums. It even ended up in a lesbian cookbook. People still come up to me and say they sang it at their thirtieth (unwed or not) birthday, and that tickles me to no end.

But there's always a backstory to such a jolly song. After all, getting older does mean something. But what? When I first wrote it, I had just left Kit, not to mention dropped forty pounds. I'd carried that weight since eighth grade, and it really felt strange to have men

looking at me twice. Naturally, Kit was not thrilled by my lyrics, especially the last phrase, "no regrets for what I didn't or I did." She thought I should regret leaving her, and rightly so. In truth, my lyrics were part truth and part bravado. As I wrote it, I really had no idea who I was. An astrologer told me I was just having my Saturn return. It didn't help.

I knew I was still attracted to men, so I went on a few dates, but the cute guys were boring and artist types scared me. But was I straight? No. Dating clubs were ridiculous, and I still read lesbian books, just as I always had. Not only was I a failed dyke, I was a failed straight woman too. I gasped for air in either culture, like a second-generation immigrant who finds the homeland stifling and the new country colorless. I'd written that I was bisexual in my diary nearly ten years before my Saturn return at thirty. But in 1980, bisexuals didn't exist; the whole women's community said so. Still, I thought I was one, and I badly needed a bisexual support group. Finally, I saw an ad for a bisexual support meeting at the Cambridge Women's Center in 1981, then another one in 1982, until finally I found some fellow searchers.

We called ourselves the BiVocals — six women, six different ages, bodies, haircuts, lives, and wishes. The rest is "bi-story" — we organized the first meeting of the Boston Bisexual Women's Network shortly after that, and the East Coast bisexual population explosion was on! (For people that didn't exist, we did all right.) The latest *Bisexual Resource Guide* (compiled by the fellow BiVocal and incorrigible compiler Robyn Ochs) lists 300 bisexual

Children From the Shadows

The largest LGBT youth conference in the country, "Children from the Shadows: Taking LGBT Youth Issues Beyond Risk to Resilience," will be held March 17-18, 2000 at the University of Hartford in W. Hartford, Connecticut. Registration: Adults: \$45 for one day, \$60 for both; Youth: \$10 one, \$15 both. For more information call 888-565-5551 or email CFSHadows@Juno.com.



Colleen and Bruce partaking in CBD at the Brisbane, Australia Bi Masquerade Ball on September 25th.

Partners of Trans People Anthology: Desire in Transition

Partners and potential partners of trans people are both extremely diverse and often politically invisible. An anthology is being compiled to illustrate who these partners are, the issues with which they struggle, and what they are doing to make the world a better place. The editor is looking for writing (essays, memoirs, stories, poetry, etc.) on the following topics: coming out stories, sex, relationships, creating community, organizing for social change. Submissions should be no more than 15 pages (double spaced) or 3700 words. Send paper versions to: Rebecca Widom, 558 11th Street, Apt. 4D, Brooklyn, NY 11215, USA or electronic ones to: rebeccawidom@iname.com by February 1, 2000.

groups and 1750 bi-inclusive groups worldwide.

So "I'm Settled" was a woman naming herself, a song which not only begat a ritual but also began my bisexual journey. So I lived happily ever after, right? Ah, friends, never publish a song you wrote in your twenties and then get older. Sometimes your lyrics come back to haunt you. I couldn't bear to sing it at age thirty-seven, for in the midst of a depressive breakdown I found myself regretting EVERYTHING that "I didn't or I did." But by age forty, I had magically reclaimed it — why is it that we tend to find our most valuable resources when we're in the gutter? — and as a guest performer with Susan Abod at Club Cafe, I sang, "when I turn forty, gonna give another party." Whenever I sing it in a concert, a rare occurrence these days, I sometimes slip in the real truth, in retrospect anyhow: "I'm in recovery —, I'm bisexual!" And last summer I updated it and sang (in my bathtub, anyway) "And when I turned fifty, it felt purty nifty!"

And indeed it did. This song refuses to die. Its most recent and eccentric variant came in the mail — my nephew's taped satire, which he sent me last July for said fiftieth birthday. He just had to tweak "Auntie Martian's famous song" with his version, re-entitled "I'm Settlin'."

I'm Settlin'

1. As I went through my forties, in control of body and mind,
I never noticed Mother Age was creepin' up from behind,
As I approached the big 5-0, there's been a change in me,
My mind is bitchin' but my body's shiftin' on account of gravity.

CHORUS: I'm settlin', oh, I'm settlin'
When I look in the mirror what do I see?
Body parts are shiftin' where they shouldn't oughta be,
I'm settlin' whoa, I'm settlin'.
My arms are gettin' flabby and my eyes are

gettin' baggy,
And I want to make it clear I'm settlin'.

2. When I look at folks about my age, I see what they have done,
With a nip and a tuck for lotsa bucks, re-arrangin' themselves some,
But I'm not vain and I'm not rich, so that stuff's not for me,
I'll just keep shufflin' along and settle naturally!

CHORUS

[Repeat first four lines]

(tag) My hair's gettin' whiter and my hips are gettin' wider
And I'm gonna make it clear I'm settlin'.

3. When I look down the road from now, another thirty years,
I hope I can be singin' a song like this again, my dears,
But I'll be older and wiser too,
Still tryin' with all my might,
But if I keep settlin' at this rate, I'll be settlin' right out of sight!

CHORUS

[Repeat first four lines]


(tag) My guts are hangin' down and my boobs are on the ground,
And I'm gonna make it clear I'm settlin'!

Obnoxious? Yes. Ageist? Absolutely. But how many cool twenty-something nephews couldn't be bothered thinking about strange aunties in faraway cities? I mean, the kid must have taken hours to make the tape, singing all the harmony parts himself and playing a mean lead guitar. It was his postmodern tribute, a way of honoring me — I'm Settled: The Next Generation!

Finally a nod to the repetition of invented ritual, and a holiday song to sing if you're overwhelmed by consumerist or traditional family celebrations. My former New Harmony Sisterhood band-mates (and mates-in-life), Katie and Pat, hold an annual women's Winter Solstice party in Western Massachusetts. Their traditional song is one they wrote twenty years ago; the ultimate zen holiday anthem, sung to the tune of "O Tannenbaum."

Thanksh anum as


Thanksh anum as, Thanksh anum as,
The three-in-one solution,
Thanksh anum as, Thanksh anum as,
A New Year's revolution.
We gather here to celebrate
And we don't care for church or state,
Thanksh anum as, Thanksh anum as,
Ends holiday pollution.

Happy Holidays! Now it's your turn. 

La Red para Lesbianas y Mujeres Bisexuales Maltratadas
The Network for Battered Lesbians and Bisexual Women

617.423.7233 (V/TTY)
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Grupo de Apoyo
Refugio de Emergencia

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To the Sea I Shall Return

By Ellyn Ruthstrom

One morning my father told us all at the breakfast table that the night before my mother had sat straight up in bed — still sleeping — and had said in a clear voice, "I come from the sea and to the sea I shall return." We all laughed together about it but we knew something of it was true about our mother. Thesea story always stayed with me and so when I go back to my hometown I first stop at the beach to pick up some shells to then take to my mother's grave which is about a mile from the shore. While at the beach, I think of her, often repeating my dad's story to myself as I stroll the high tide line for treasures. I know she was deeply connected to the water and I feel that when I am there alone.

My mother's gravestone is an oblong gray stone sunken flat into the ground with just her name and years of her life: Gail Ruthstrom 1933-1973. I put the items I bring for her along the outline of the stone, nudging them into the grassy edge so that when the lawnmower comes by they may be slightly protected from the blades. I like to find evidence of the shells I've brought before, but sometimes the gap in time is several months and there are no signs of my offerings. Sometimes I have to find the stone beneath the snow and I brush it clean before leaving my fits. I take my time to tell her what I need to at that moment and then I go home.

I am a graveyard wanderer from way back; it's somewhat of a family trait. My mother's father often wrote about graves in his newspaper column and photographed hundreds of them for historical articles. My best friend was Brenda in junior high and she lived across the street from the same graveyard my mother is now buried in. After school we would take her dog and her younger siblings and go play in there for hours. Hide and seek, freeze tag, leapfrog over the stones — it seemed a vast and varied playground.

Now I am the one with the camera who stops to shoot an interesting stone face. Youthful deaths, multiple spouses, death from childbirth, epidemics wiping out entire families, the women who never married, and even the ones who reach uncommon ages of 70 or 80. So many stories to be gleaned from very few words etched on stone.



Leaving a snow angel behind on one visit.

And I think of my mother's simple stone, how little it says about her. At the time of her death my father and her parents could not deal well with her loss and they had chosen the most basic stone to mark her grave. My sister and I at different times had wanted to find out if it was possible to change the stone, but discovered the task would be exorbitantly expensive. We decided it wasn't worth it.

But several years ago, on the twentieth anniversary of my mother's death we planted a tree in my mother's honor at my sister's house. My sister, brother, father, his partner, my grandparents, and my uncle and aunt all gathered around the new tree and we shared some thoughts about my mother. I read a poem I had written about her, my grandfather spoke of the tremendous loss he still felt for his daughter, and my sister talked about why she wanted to plant the tree in a place the family would be connected to for a long time. We wept together, acknowledging the common pain we had all carried on our own for two decades.

I continue to make my sandy sojourns to bring my mother her shells and stones. I know that I do not need to do this for her; I'm sure she has returned to the sea that called her in her dreams so many years ago. But as they say about funerals, they are more for the living than for the dead. ▽

Off Our Backs Looking for Intern

Off Our Backs, a feminist women's news journal, is looking for some radical women to intern in their Washington, DC office. Hours are very flexible and work environment is relaxed and casual. The journal has been in existence since 1970 and is a collectively run publication. As an intern at *Off Our Backs* you will take part in collective meetings, review and analyze mainstream and special-interest publications for information, assist with layout and design, have the opportunity to write articles for the publication, assist with general office duties and organizational responsibilities. For more information, contact Jenn at 202-234-8072 or offourbacks@compuserve.com. If interested please fax a resume and cover letter to 202-234-8092 or send to: Attn: Jenn Smith, c/o Off Our Backs, 2337B 18th St. N.W., Washington, DC 20009.

Check out BBWN's website at:

[davidr.ne.mediaone.net/
biresource/bbwn/](http://davidr.ne.mediaone.net/biresource/bbwn/)

A Cornucopia of Ritual in Our Lives

To make Thanks-giving a real day of giving thanks, rather than a celebration of colonialization and turkeys, we join hands and go around the table telling the others gathered about something we are REALLY thankful for.



When I went to London in 1990, the London Bi Women's Group organized a potluck dinner in my honor, calling it an "American-Style Potluck." The tradition may have caught on since, but as of 1990, potlucks were not part of British culture. Potlucks and brunches seem to me two staple traditions of many GLBT and progressive communities.

Robyn

My husband buys his own gifts for Xmas and I wrap them. He is Puerto Rican and we have a big open house on the 24th, Nochebuena, with traditional foods, coquito, a rum and coconut drink (yummy), Salsa and Merengue music, and dancing till the wee hours. Then we spend the day in New Hampshire with my family.

Eileen

When we celebrate Xmas at my Mom's, (my husband and I alternate Xmas between his family in Montreal, and mine in New Jersey), we celebrate on Xmas Eve.

My family is Polish Roman Catholic. They celebrate on Xmas eve with a five-course meatless dinner. First, we stand and the oldest male of the host house, (usually my uncle or cousin), says the blessing. For this meal they acquire special eucharistic wafers from church which have been blessed. Not the little round ones, but big square sheets. The people of the host house walk up to each guest, Christian or not, and wish them good health, good luck, and God's blessing for the New Year. At which, they both break a piece off of the wafer and eat a little. The guest now has a piece to do likewise with those of his family and who he has invited. Now the food comes.

First course is two soups, borscht and mushroom soup. We wait for this mushroom soup all year, because this is the only time of the year we get it. The soup is made with wild mushrooms imported from Poland, which cost

@ \$120/pound. We save a small handful of the mushrooms for Easter and dump the pound of mushrooms into the soup. After the soup, we have the pierogi course — kapusta (sourkraut) and wild mushroom, potatoe and dill, and cheese pierogis. Next comes the salad course. Then fresh fish with mashed potatoes, some veggies, and stewed tomatoes. Now we take a break and clean up. It's time to open presents, because by this time the children are going nuts, and we are all stuffed to the gills. After presents, we have coffee and dessert. By the time that's all over with, we have just enough time to go to church to get a good seat for midnight mass, so we can sleep in in the morning.

Julie

My family is very sick and twisted. Years ago, my father found a petrified toad in his backyard. I don't know where he got the idea to do this, but he wrapped it in one of my younger brother's Christmas presents. Of course, my brother freaked out and we all laughed. My father reclaimed the toad, and every year he would package it with one of Luke's gifts. Every year we would all try to guess which gift it would be in. Every year, Luke would freak out, and we would all laugh (he was in his late teens when this started — it's not like we were irreparably scarring a young child). It's so funny to see my brother — who would normally shred the wrapping off a gift — opening his packages very carefully, wondering if THIS was the one containing the toad.

Sadly, the toad was lost two years ago. We suspect Luke hid it somewhere.

We also have another more recent tradition where we try to outdo each other in giving gifts guaranteed to make the recipient cry — my mom nearly won the year she gave me the quilt she made, but I trumped her with the book of poetry I had published, which I dedicated to her.

Kirstin

I'm what I call a half-assed pagan. I have a modest pagan altar in my room that consists of rocks that I've found from places such as Washington State, Maine, and my back yard. The rocks represent the earth element. I have a brass chalice that represents positive female energy and I have a decorative, antique, brass letter opener that is my athame or sword that represents positive male energy. I have a glass bowl of water that represents purification and the water element, a small red glass that holds salt honors the sense of taste, a small bowl of lavender honors smell, the rocks honor touch, a smooth amethyst rock with a pentagram hon-

New Hampshire Bi Group



BiNet New Hampshire is a social and support group for bisexual and bi-curious men and women in the Manchester, New Hampshire area. The new group has weekly social activities and a support group meeting once a month to talk about bisexual issues of interest to members. For more information, contact Wendy Curry at nh-bisexuals-owner@onelist.com.

Cambridge Women's Center Trans Policy Discussion

The Cambridge Women's Center is considering a proposal to change their transgender policy. The proposed change would permit anyone "who chooses to identify as a woman and who lives in society as a woman full-time" to use the Women's Center. The center is hosting three open collective discussions about the policy on Wednesday, December 1; Thursday, January 6; and Monday, February 7. There is also a Transgender Policy Binder located in the Center's Resource Room for anyone to write their comments about the policy. BBWN has a membership policy of including all self-identified women. Because BBWN holds its Introductory Meeting at the Women's Center we would very much like the policy to change and be consistent with our own policy.

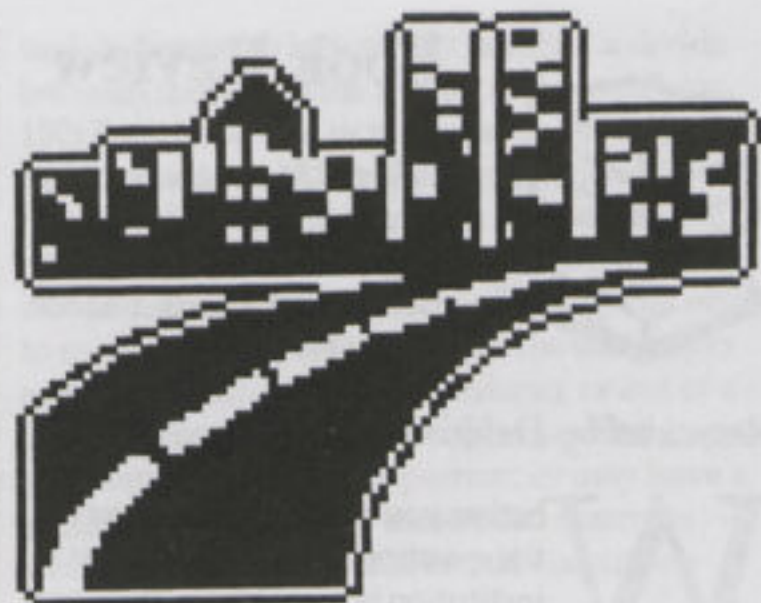
The Road to Ritual

By Elle Thomas

What is the difference between rituals and habits? The word habit implies no conscious thought. It is "an acquired mode of behavior that has become nearly involuntary." We habituate ourselves to perform necessary mundane tasks, for ease, efficiency, as a memory tool. Humans cope with chaos by creating structure. Often, when the disorder extends to the spiritual realm, rituals are born. A ritual is an act that is larger than one's self. For those who attend church or temple, organized religion is a link to the past, to the future, with contemporaries. Knowledge that many people perform an identical ritual is part of the power and part of the healing. It is immortality in a world of violence, illness, unpredictability.

Some rituals are reserved for particular occasions, like Rosh Hashanah, Easter, graduations, the joining of people into couples and families. New Year's resolutions are another such ritual. January 1st brings most of us to a place of reflection of the past and hopefulness for the future. Many people make promises about their behavior for the coming twelve months. Others let go of anger and disappointments stored up in the year just passed. My ritual is to write down my regrets, remembrances, failures, joys, lessons learned, and then release them (and so myself) in flame.

Another ritual I have developed is intended not for a specific event but rather an emotion. Anytime I feel overcome by negative emotion — whether sadness, anxiety, depression, anger — I remind myself that my happiness is my responsibility. So I toss my camping gear into my car, pick a highway, and drive. Traveling is my history, my future, my religion, my lover. It's rediscovery of familiar places, awe of unknown spaces, self-reliance and self-determination. I find myself by getting lost, in roadside coffeeshop banter, in quirky rural general stores. I pick up



odd phrases (oh, you're from away then?), gourmet hints (use salsa and onion on grilled cheese sandwiches), and enchanting humor. On one August afternoon, amidst the hoes, hides and canned goods of the only supply store in Blue Hill, Maine, I bought a snowball for a quarter.

Traveling is my connection with the nomadic lifestyle of my parents. Changing homes, and, often, countries, every six months for the first decade of my life, instilled within me a strong bent toward a permanent home, with substantial furniture and walls brimming of books and other treasures. It also gave me a rather quenchless wanderlust. My life is a battleground between these contrary desires. Since graduation from high school, since I have been in control of where and how I live, I have been nesting. I have lived in Boston now four times longer than anywhere else. Through college, marriage and divorce I have rented only four apartments. I own a hundred-pound oak desk, a queen-size cherry wood bed, a six-foot long church pew. I have boxes of books, framed art and miscellaneous items in storage. And, whenever I feel stifled by these possessions, I have my traveling ritual. ▼

"Will & Grace" Actress Out as Bi

Megan Mullally, the actress who plays Grace's assistant on the TV show "Will & Grace" recently gave a very interesting interview to *The Advocate* magazine. Among other things, Mullally said, "I consider myself bisexual, and my philosophy is, everyone innately is, although I've never had a full-on relationship with a woman, just a couple of what I'd term half-hashed dalliances. So I haven't explored it to the degree that I'd like to, but I'll tell you I'm open to it. And I don't have any problem saying that."

Mullally also said that she's had two relationships with gay men. "Never had sex — but totally passionate fooling around." Hmm, where does one begin and the other end? ▼

"Telling our Spiritual Journey"

Workshop led by Annie Goglia, Storyteller

Saturday or Sunday, January 8th or 9th for 3 hours

time and place TBA (probably in Cambridge)

sliding scale fee—\$20 - \$35

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or at 781-646-2379



Book Review

What is Marriage For? The Strange Social History of our Most Intimate Institution, by E.J. Graff, Beacon Press, 1999

Reviewed by Debbie Block-Schwenk

Whether you're single or partnered, the question of marriage as an institution is something everyone has an opinion about. If you're partnered, whether you're legally married, consider yourself married despite the law's failure to recognize your relationship, or don't see the point in defining your relationship in those terms, you still have an ideal sense of what a relationship should be, and that ideal is shaped by what you know about marriage and its history and origins. But you probably don't know as much as you think. E. J. Graff's fascinating and lively survey of the history of marriage in the Western world taught me a great deal about the interplay of the purposes of marriage and how "traditional" marriage as expounded by the cultural conservatives is anything but. By tracing the changes marriage has gone through (private versus public, secular versus religious, permanent versus temporary, economic versus emotional, among others), Graff convincingly argues that allowing same gender couples to legally marry is no more radical a change to marriage than the many that have come before, and it is in fact the logical extension of the trend toward marriage as defined by individual freedom and affection.

This trend has been going on for centuries, as Graff illustrates in numerous places. For example, in a survey of petitions for annulment in a French town "only 9% before 1770 cited emotional attachment as a reason for marriage, while 41% after 1770 did." (pg. 234, quoting Phillips, *Untying the Knot*.) Two hundred years before the "free love" revolution of the 1960's, the roots were already in place, to blossom more fully in the nineteenth century and continue their growth to this day. What spurred this transformation was changing economic conditions — industrialization and the seeds of capitalism were changing society from one in which the middle class craftsman needed his wife as co-worker and "office manager" or the farmer required a wife to help with the wide array of tasks needed to keep the farm and household running. Without economics forcing a husband-wife team into a single interdependent unit, the entire philosophy of what marriage was for began to change.

Graff sums up this transformation on page 234, in the Chapter entitled "Heart": "Imagine telling a judge you should be free of your employment contract or military services, with no

penalties, because you no longer loved your co-workers or officers. You'd be laughed out of court. Nobody says you'll always enjoy fulfilling your duties, but society would dissolve if every contract could be enforced only on its signers' feeling — which is how the love-is-gone attitude toward divorce struck our predecessors. But as the traditional marriage economy collapsed — the economy in which two workers were dependent on each other for life — marriage's heart was left as its main justification."

Graff divides the book into six chapters (all potential purposes of marriage): Money, Sex, Babies, Kin, Order, and Heart. All tell intriguing stories, although the thematic approach rather than a chronological one makes it difficult to relate aspects across timelines. "What is Marriage For?" is not intended to be a comprehensive survey, however; at roughly 250 pages it is instead a thematic collection of historical facts and sociological data, far more accessible for Graff's light-hearted approach.

The chapter "Babies" includes a section on defining family, a murkier subject than I would have thought: "Historians and anthropologists frankly throw up their hands and admit they can't define 'family' in any way that works universally....the European family, like the Roman, included people we'd consider legal strangers: they were grouped together not by blood but by whether they lived under one roof." (pg. 94) Medieval children of all classes were often fostered out to other households; many were raised as infants by wetnurses; many lost one or both parents to disease, war, desertion, or accident before reaching adulthood. The "nuclear family", and even what we think of as the biologically related "extended family" were rarities for the majority of people in the history of the West.

The chapter entitled "Order" traces one of society's most vexing issues about marriage: who decides you're married? Does an outside authority — church or state — have the power to declare a couple married, or does the couple have the right to declare themselves? I'm so used to thinking of marriage as a legal/religious institution that I was surprised to learn in Graff's book that when the Catholic Church declared marriage a sacrament (which happened in 1215), what defined marriage was not priestly blessings or the requirements of witnesses, but the couple's private vows.

Yet the murkiness and disorder this created gradually took their toll. Upper class families were dismayed when disobedient children exchanged vows with people not of their parent's wishes, the line between betrothal and marriage was blurred, and unhappy couples wound up in court "having violent 'he said/she said' arguments. Had they gotten married after all, or was one fabricating?" (pg. 198) Gradually,

Portsmouth Bi Women's Group Has Moved

The Bisexual Women's Support and Resource Group of Portsmouth, New Hampshire meets at the Women's Health Consortium which has moved to a new location at 29 Vaughan Mall. The new location is on a walkway street next door to the Little Professor's Bookstore on Congress Street in downtown Portsmouth. For more information on the location or on the Bi Women's Group call 603-431-1669.

Boston PFLAG Offers Scholarships

Greater Boston PFLAG is again offering scholarships to high school seniors who are involved with their Gay/Straight alliances or AGLY groups (or both). Awards will be based on that involvement, the quality of the written essay they write and enrollment in college for fall 2000. The scholarships will be presented at PFLAG's Annual Recognition Dinner on April 1, 2000. For more information, call Ken Rapp, PFLAG Scholarship Committee Chair at 617-923-2571.


the Church required the presence of a priest and witnesses at a wedding. With the Protestant Reformation and the rise of the nation state, the job of regulating marriage increasing fell to the government. And the states, to varying degrees, used that power (in 1739 marriage rules issued in Prussia, students were not allowed to marry before graduation, and cripples or blind persons could not marry at all). (pg. 202) In the early United States, the frontier lifestyle and mobility of the population led to the creation of private "common-law" marriage, but moral objections and the same legal questions that had baffled the Church led to the centralization of power in state-registered marriages.

While Graff's "Order" chapter makes the convincing argument that some kind of publicly defined marriage is needed, she also makes explicit the belief that sexism is the primary force behind opposition to same-sex marriage — and that recognizing same-sex relationships will force a gender-blind reexamination of marriage laws. She quotes a writer in the *Weekly Standard*, David Frum, speaking of those who wish to "abolish marriage and replace it with a new unisex partnership," (pg. 224) a term Graff and I both find positive and uplifting, while conservative Frum considers it threatening. The battle for same sex marriage, she argues, "is a fight-by-proxy over one of the last strongholds of gender supremacy: the idea that a man rules a woman, that a woman without a man is missing something essential, that a man who seeks another man is degrading himself by turning into a woman." (pg. 223) If society can get the sexism out of marriage, it will be a better institution for all couples, whether same or opposite gender.

While I'd heartily recommend this book for its easy tone and important information, I was a bit confused as to Graff's target audience. The ending of each chapter reasserts the inclusion of same-sex couples and might come across as preachy to those not already sympathetic to the idea, while anyone following her reasoning can see where her threads lead. One slightly longer conclusion might have been more effective than six separate discourses toward acceptance of same-sex marriage.

As a married woman who believes polyamory is possible, I also had some problems with Graff's responses to the "monogamy question." After surveying the history of Utopian and "free-love" communities and movements, she responds to the issue of promiscuity within the gay community by saying that allowing for same-sex marriage will not force anyone to abandon their non-monogamous lifestyle. True, but she opens the door for quite another type of social control by stating, "Opening marriage to same-sex couples may well shift our society's sexual dividing line from the current and temporary line between homosexual and heterosexual

back to one more historically familiar, a divide between monogamous and promiscuous." (pg. 190) For a book that in most cases relishes exploring the murky and fluid lines of relationship and family, this is one division that she leaves clear-cut, whether out of a lack of desire to raise the issues that responsible non-monogamy can bring to marriage (issues that threaten the status quo even more than same-sex marriage), or out of a true ignorance that some people may find happiness with more than one partner, or may have a successful, emotionally committed marriage while seeking recreational sexual encounters elsewhere.

But who knows what the future will hold for marriage after so many changes in definition? "[D]efine marriage as a lifetime commitment, and divorce flouts its very definition. Define marriage as a vehicle for legitimate procreation, and contraception violates that definition. Define marriage as an economic bond, and allowing women to own property divides the family into warring and immoral bits. Define marriage as a bond between one man and one woman, and same sex marriage is absurd. But define marriage as a commitment to live up to the rigorous demands of love, to care for each other as best as you humanly can, then all these possibilities — divorce, contraception, feminism, marriage between two women or two men — are necessary to respect the human spirit." (pg. 252) For anyone interested in how the human spirit has grappled with all these issues and more over the past few centuries, I recommend this fascinating book. 

Browser Beat: By Elle Thomas


<http://womb.wwdc.com/queer.html>

This nicely-designed page is a treasure of queer women's links both humorous and political. But wait, there's more! Point your browser up one level <http://womb.wwdc.com> for a content-rich 18+ site with a definite queer sensibility.

Celebrating from page 1

words that I chose. Instead of defending my lack of commitment to the gay community, or explaining my interest in other wimmin to the straight community, I was able to proactively express my sexuality and my love for this community.

It made sense that I'd celebrate this with Tendo, Sanyu, Birungi, and the rest; they are my family. We help each other celebrate our joys and get through our sorrows.

In the morning, Birungi Jr. helped me hang my bi pride flag. We shared a dinner and I talked about what the day means and why it's important. They gave it every respect that I expect I'll give to Tendo, Jr.'s christening. Because that's what families do. 

Pride Zone in Noho



Pride Zone is a group for GLBTQ youth (21 and under) that meets the first and third Thursdays of each month from 7-8:30 p.m. at the Unitarian Universalist Church in North-ampton, Massachusetts. For more info, contact KJ Nichols or Heather King at 413-584-9197 or pridezone@geocities.com.

ors sight, and when I tap the brass chalice with my athame, it makes a lovely *bong* noise that honors sound. I have tea candles that I light and I have a tea candle in a miniature lantern that my Grandmother gave me that's in the shape of a frog with a yellow-glass belly. Why yellow and not green, dunno. But I light that to thank the powers that be for my blessings. I light the other tea candles to pray. The lit candles also represent the fire element. Occasionally I'll burn incense which represents the air element. The reason I call myself a half-assed pagan is because I don't follow specified rituals for specified seasons. I just pray by my altar and thank the powers that be. I have neglected my altar lately so as soon as possible, I'll refill the bowl of water, replace the salt, shine up my rocks, and light my candles. It's a way of honoring my blessings and the higher powers I believe in.

Abby

We have a sort of twisted birthday tradition in my family. I think that it is traditional (in general) for the birthday person not to speak, after blowing out their candles, until they have their first bite of cake. In my family, everyone else is served first while the entire family taunts the mute birthday person.

Joy

For me, being bi is just another thing about me that makes me feel different from the rest of humanity. This feeling of being different was with me at a young age, even within my family. My family were atheists (my mother was a recovering Catholic) but we still looked forward to arguing in style during the standard Christian festivities. As a result, I came to dislike and actively avoid these times. The rituals and celebrations of year's end were meaningless to me, and continue to be.

A "ritual" that I do enjoy is the process of sorting through photos and other memorabilia of my life. I don't mind the fact that this process is forced upon me at times when I move house. In fact, I think cleaning one's life out every few years can be very therapeutic. In the hours before writing this note, I sorted through old birthday cards, good-bye cards and vacation photos. It gave me pause to remember and reminisce on people I have known and loved. Its meaningfulness to me outweighs anything that could possibly be dictated by a calendar. (Except maybe dancing into the dawn of January 1, 2000 in Sydney, Australia and then having a swim on the beach before breakfast.)

Carol



Come Online with BBWN!

BBWN has three new online lists for you to participate on:

- **bbwn-events** is a listing of events for or of interest to BBWN members and other bi and bi-friendly women in and around the Boston area.
- **bbwn-activist** is a list for bi women in the Boston area who would like to help plan, shape, and implement events, programs, actions, and policies of BBWN.
- **bbwn-chat** is a discussions list for BBWN members and other bi and bi-friendly women.

To subscribe to any of these lists, send e-mail to: listname-request@lists.home.welcomehome.org (replace listname with name of list you are subscribing to) and include only the command "subscribe" (without the quotes) in the body of the message.

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The Present

By Jane Kaplan

It's time to make a wish
Tell me - what have you been
praying for?
Peace? Love? Prosperity?
Something new on DVD?
Imagine what it takes to make
your wish come true
Who it touches
How it reaches
Up, back, down, around
Tell me - did you see it?
Good.
Now light a candle, close your
eyes, and make your wish
Take a deep
breath -



CALENDAR *continued from page 16*

Magoo's). Remember to go upstairs where it's women's pool night. Each game is \$1. Relaxed atmosphere and jukebox.

December 27 ♦ Monday

Bisexual People of Color Potluck Dinner, 7-9 p.m. Join other bisexual people of color for a potluck dinner and discussion group. A small donation is requested to help pay for the space. The group meets in the library at the Boston Living Center at 29 Stanhope St. in Boston. For more information, call 617-424-9595 and leave a message for Ananda or Maria Christina. Para informacion en espanol 617-277-2017.



Thanks for reading
BiWomen.

Do you subscribe?

How about a little
commitment?

January 4 ♦ Tuesday

Bi Rap at the Women's Center, 7:30-9:00 p.m. Call 617-354-8807 for topic. See December 7th.

January 5 ♦ Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m. See December 1st.

January 10 ♦ Monday

BiWomen Submissions Deadline. This issue's theme is "Bi Women Write About Men." Is your life partner a man? How about your best friend? What turns you on about men? What gets you really angry about them? What men have been important to you in your life? What men do you admire? What men would you like to take to bed? Send submissions to: *BiWomen*, P.O. Box 400639, Cambridge, MA 02140 or e-mail to eruthstr@mail.lesley.edu.



January 12 ♦ Wednesday

Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting, 7-9 p.m.

BBWN Introductory Meeting, 7:30-9:00 p.m. A safe space for women to connect with the bisexual community. Learn about the Boston Bisexual Women's Network and other bi resources available in the area. Cambridge Women's Center, 26 Pleasant St., Cambridge, 617-354-8807.

January 14 ♦ Friday

Bi Night at Dance Friday, meet there at 9:00 pm, Watertown Square. Wear comfortable clothes you can dance & move easily in. Call or e-mail Annie to RSVP and for directions. RSVP necessary! kalamari@juno.com or 781-646-2379.



January 15 ♦ Saturday

BBWN Video Night, 7:30 p.m. We'll be gathering at Natalie's in Roslindale for an evening of video viewing. We'll try to find one or two videos with bi themes that will be good viewing. This is a fundraiser with a suggested donation of \$5. (Cheaper than most Friday night movies!) Call Natalie for more info and directions, 617-327-0772.



January 18 ♦ Tuesday

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m. See December 1st.

Bi Rap at the Women's Center, 7:30-9:00 p.m. Call 617-354-8807 for topic. See December 7th.

January 19 ♦ Wednesday

Bi Space's 10th Anniversary, 7-9 p.m. Anyone who has ever attended a BiSpace is invited to come and share your memories of the past decade. Those who haven't are welcome to sit at the old-timers' knees and ask questions. See December 22nd.

January 25 ♦ Tuesday

BBWN Pre-mailing Dinner, 6 p.m. at Bertucci's on Stanhope St., just two doors down from the Bi Office.

BiWomen mailing, 7-9 p.m. at the BRC Office, 29 Stanhope Street. Label, stuff, and lick. Actually the licking is *after* the mailing. Ha! Join us.

Biversity Calendar Mailing at BRC Office, 7-9 p.m.

January 31 ♦ Monday

Bisexual People of Color Potluck Dinner, 7-9 p.m. Boston Living Center, 29 Stanhope St. See October 25th.

Due to the Thanksgiving holiday *BiWomen* had to get to the printer early. All Biversity events are not listed. Please call the BRC at 617-424-9595 for the most updated information.

Biversity Boston is the mixed gender bisexual Network of Greater Boston.

Ongoing Events

4th Mondays:

Bi People of Color Potluck, 7-9 p.m. at the Boston Living Center, 29 Stanhope St. For info call 617-424-9595.

1st & 3rd

Thursdays:

Bi Women's Resource & Support Group. 7 p.m. at the Women's Health Consortium, 379 State St., Portsmouth, NH. For info call 603-431-1669 or contact Sue Corcoran at schmoo@nh.ultranet.com.

Women's Club Nights

Saturdays: Lava Bar in Kenmore Square, 575 Commonwealth Ave. at the Howard Johnson's.



SUBSCRIPTION RATE
for *BiWomen*
(sliding scale)

___\$0-\$20 (pay what you can)

___\$20-\$30 (suggested)

___\$30-\$100 (super bi)

_____New Subscriber

_____Renewal

NAME_____

ADDRESS_____

PHONE (Optional)_____

BBWN, P.O. BOX 400639, Cambridge, MA 02140

The "Bi Office"

is the Bisexual Resource Center, located at 29 Stanhope Street, behind Club Cafe, right next door to Bertucci's and just down the street from the Hard Rock Cafe. For info call 617-424-9595.

Ongoing Events

1st & 3rd Tuesdays:

Bi Women's Rap. 7:30 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. For info and discussion topics call 617-354-8807.

Wednesdays:

Gendertalk. 8:30-9:30 p.m. on WMBR 88.1 FM. Deals with transgender and queer issues.

2nd Thursdays: Single Jewish Lesbian and Bisexual Women's Group. 6:30-8 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant Street. Info: 617-499-9612.

Bi Married Women's Support Group. 7-9 p.m. at the Bi Office. For bi women who are married to or in a relationship with a man. Call Debbie at 617-782-2754 for info.

3rd Thursdays: SpeakOut Meeting. 8 p.m., at the Boston Living Center, 29-33 Stanhope St., Boston. Wheelchair accessible. General meeting at 6:45 p.m., theme program starts at 8 p.m. Info: 617-354-0133.

CALENDAR

December 1 ♦ Wednesday

World AIDS Day. The AIDS Action Committee is sponsoring the annual Candlelight Procession. Gather in front of the Boston Center for the Arts, 539 Tremont Street by 6:15 p.m. The procession will proceed to the Jesuit Urban Center, 775 Harrison Ave. near the Boston Medical Center where there will be a Ceremony of Remembrance. There is also a Medicine Wheel Installation inside the Boston Center for the Arts November 30-December 4 that you can visit and participate in. Call the BCA at 617-426-5000 for details.

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m. An informal support group for people who think they may be bisexual or attracted to more than one sex. A small donation is requested to help pay for the space. The group meets at the Bisexual Resource Center at 29 Stanhope St. in Boston. Call 617-424-9595 for info.

December 4 ♦ Saturday

Lava Bar Dance Night, 10 p.m. - 2:00 a.m. Ready to get out for a club night? Join BBWN members at the only women's dance bar on a Saturday night in Boston. Designed as a comfortable night space for



women but it usually has a nice mixed crowd.

December 7 ♦ Tuesday

Bi Rap at the Women's Center, 7:30-9:00 p.m. Topic: "Holiday Stress." An open discussion group for bi women that meets the first and third Tuesdays of every month at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., 617-354-8807.

December 8 ♦ Wednesday

Bisexual Resource Center Annual Meeting, 7-9 p.m. This is the meeting where we review the past year's work, look ahead to the next, and elect new board members and officers. All bi community members are welcome and encouraged to attend. The meeting is at the Living Center on Stanhope Street in Back Bay.

December 12 ♦ Sunday

BBWN Potluck Brunch, 11 a.m. Join us for our monthly brunch at Lynn's house in Newton. Bring a dish and relax, eat, and socialize with other members. T accessible. Call Lynn for directions, 617-965-5564.

December 15 ♦ Wednesday

Bi Space, 7-9 p.m. A friendly discussion space to meet other bisexuals and talk about bisexual issues. This month's topic is "Bisexuality and Intimacy." A \$2 donation is requested to help pay for the space. BiSpace is held at the BRC at 29 Stanhope St. in Boston.

Dear BiWomen,

As one of the people at the Manchester Bi Group in England, I wanted to just drop you all a quick line. Every two months you send us a copy of *BiWomen* magazine, and it probably sometimes feels like they're going into a black hole! So, I thought I should just tell you that the group here still exists, that we read the magazine with delight and pass the occasional copy on to the editor of the British bisexual magazine *BCN* for him to nick all your ideas! It was particularly good to be getting *BiWomen* six months to a year ago, when three of the four bi groups in this city folded and there were only three of us still going to the one surviving group! I like the way you have little snippets in the margins of each page, the themed issues seem to work well, and your calendar listings make us all jealous as the bi scene isn't so strong here.

Anyway, best wishes, many thanks and keep up the good work!

Jenni



December 18 ♦ Saturday

BBWN's 4th Annual Holiday Open House, 8:00 p.m. Come and be a part of our end-of-the-year bash. If you've been there before, you know it can be a great time to catch up with old friends or meet some new ones. This is a fundraiser for BBWN, with a sliding scale donation at the door of \$5-10. The party is being hosted by Carol Gebert at her Cambridge home. Please call Carol for directions at 491-6777. T and bus accessible.



December 21 ♦ Tuesday

Coming Out as Bisexual. 7-9 p.m. See December 1st.

Bi Rap at the Women's Center, 7:30-9:00 p.m. Topic: "Why is Bi Rap Here?" See December 7th.

December 23 ♦ Thursday

BBWN Pool Outing, 8:30 p.m. Need a break from holiday shopping, family angst, could care less what people will be doing for Christmas? Then head over to the Hideaway near Fresh Pond Circle (Behind Ma

CALENDAR continues on page 15